THE NEWSLETTER FOR ONTARIO'S PUBLIC WORKS PROFESSIONALS

ADVANCE

AORS Promoting knowledge ⇒ Pursuing excellence

FALL 2021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

You have been president of AORS for a very difficult 18 months as COVID-19 has imposed many unprecedented challenges on our association, municipalities, and all aspects of how we live. Hopes are high that we are now starting to come out of the pandemic although with some setbacks. What are some of the things you are looking forward to regarding the association and municipal life?

There's no doubt that the previous 18 months or so have created unique challenges for our association and the hundreds of municipalities represented through our local associations. Hopes are indeed high that we have weathered the brunt of the storm, and we're on our way to improved conditions so to speak.

I guess if we were to look back before looking forward, we would realise the many successes the association has had amid these times. Drawing on these successes is one thing that I am looking forward to; the continual improvement of AORS and the ability to adapt to the needs of our membership is something that I am eagerly anticipating.

Not to be overlooked though are the high hopes in anticipation of returning to in-person settings for numerous events, whether it involves AORS, or the municipal world, or both. As your president this is something that I have duly missed over the last 18 months and I'm very eager to get out among the membership to interact and network with my peers. Hopefully the conversations will be less about COVID and more about roads.

What advice would you give AORS members, both supplier and municipal as we hopefully start to get together in person over the next 6 months?

We've shown that we have the ability to adapt to accommodate both in-person and/or virtual meetings and I think that over the next little while we'll begin to see more direction either through corporate policies or elsewhere and have a better understanding of how things will progress. I guess my advice on this is to remain confident knowing that we intend to find a way to accommodate a safe return to in-person business, and to continue to show respect for your peers and colleagues along the way.

What positive outcomes for AORS did you observe during the pandemic? How can the association best leverage these positives going forward?

AORS has had many positive accomplishments, too many to list. There are a couple that stand out for me, the first being the continuation of quality education programs by shifting the delivery of courses to virtual classrooms. This has opened

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Bill Wilson CRS
AORS President

Association of Ontario Road Supervisors

These are your newest board directors for 2021 and AORS would encourage anyone who gets the opportunity to serve as a local association representative to do so. It is a great group to be involved with and provides so much insight into the public works industry. Thanks for stepping up everyone!

2021 EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

At the September board meeting a motion was passed to have all 2021 executive board officers remain in their current positions for an additional year due to the lack of activities in 2021.

Thanks to all four officers for your dedication to AORS and your guidance through the pandemic!!

From left to right are: Joseph Reid, CRS-S, AORS second vice president, representing District 8 RSA; Bill Wilson CRS, 2021 AORS president, representing Perth County RSA; Mike Alcock, AORS first vice president, representing Huron County RSA, and Phil Wilson CRS-S, past president, representing Grey County PWA.

MEET THE **NEWEST MEMBERS** OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LOTS OF CHANGES OVER THE PAST YEAR

Patrick Bates Director, Chatham Kent RSA

Patrick started as road superintendent of the former Zone Township in Kent County and has been a Certified Road Supervisor (CRS) since 1996. Currently a roads supervisor in the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, he has been heavily involved in the Chatham Kent association and an integral part of the 2019 trade show held there. Patrick is married with one child starting college this fall. He enjoys playing music in various groups and racing old cars. He replaced Glen Harding as Chatham Kent's director in 2020 and we are sure he will be a great addition to the board. Welcome aboard Patrick!!

Tommy Sauve Director, Eastern Ontario RSA

Tommy joins the board with 21 years of experience in health and safety and training in the logistics and municipal fields. He is the safety, training, and operations supervisor with the city of Cornwall, president of the local association and replaces Ewen McDonald as their director. Tommy has a son Nick, and a daughter Sharelle and can often be found about town in his Mustang Boss. He also enjoys providing information on health and safety matters to the citizens of Cornwall which won him "The Concerned Citizen Award" from WHO last fall. He has some big shoes to fill but Tommy is very keen to get involved in board activities and all are quite confident in his abilities

AORS is excited to have you join the board and look forward to working with you. Thanks for stepping up, Tommy!

Delton Zehr Director, Dufferin Caledon, RSA

Since graduating from Fanshawe College with C.E.T. in 1993, Delton has gained a broad range of experience in road construction, public works, road operations and leadership over the past 27 years. He has experience as a contractor, engineering consultant as well as public works. Delton began as manager of road operations and fleet at the Town of Caledon in July 2020 after more than 12 years with the design and construction division of the Region of Waterloo. He holds both a C.E.T. (Certified Engineering Technologist) designation with OACETT and his CRS with AORS since 1998. Delton is an enthusiastic and knowledgeable member of the Dufferin Caledon association and will be a great addition to the AORS board.

Delton replaces outgoing director Scott Martin who represented Dufferin Caledon very well for several years.

Welcome aboard Delton! We look forward to working with you.

Cyrus Rife Director, Transportation Professionals of Waterloo Region

Cyrus has held the position of supervisor of operations for the Township of North Dumfries for the past 7 years He lives in the township in the village of Ayr with his wife and three children. Although he only joined the local association 3 years ago Cyrus feels he has gained many friends and contacts there and is very keen on getting involved. Cyrus says: “I took on the AORS rep position to further my CRS development and to expand outside our local association. I look forward to the upcoming years”. He is also looking forward to sharing this new knowledge with his Local Association.

Great to see new and enthusiastic members join the board! Look forward to your input Cyrus!

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MEET THE **NEWEST MEMBERS** OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

He's back! Andrew Coghill Director, Essex County MSA

In 2011 Andy started with the Town of Kingsville after working for 20 plus years in private construction and civil engineering. While attending his first LA meeting he was nominated to the local executive and asked to attend an AORS board meeting. After attending that first meeting Andy felt very at home with AORS and was even nominated as second vice in 2016. However, he left the municipal sector later that year and rejoined the private sector where he spent four more years. Andy realized that he missed working on road improvements, winter maintenance and working with the public and in 2020 he joined the Town of LaSalle as roads supervisor. He jumped right back into the Essex County local association and volunteered to become AORS rep. ("I really missed the wealth of knowledge and working with all the board members–a great bunch of people") Andy is hoping to finish out his career on the board and with the local association.

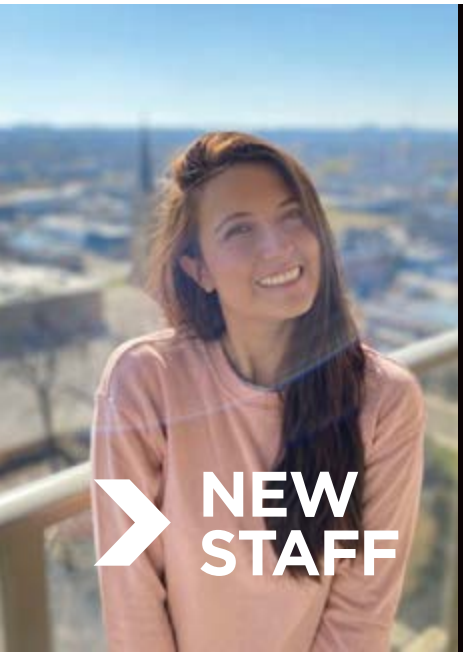
AORS is very pleased to see Andy back on the board and looks forward to his input. Welcome back Andy!!

Tyler Dziarmaga Director, North of Superior PWA

Born and raised in Dryden, Tyler left in 2009 to attend Cambrian College in Sudbury. He completed the 3-year Civil Engineering Technologist program and was on both the dean's and president's lists for academic achievement. Tyler worked in the private sector for the next several years where he gained valuable skills. Despite many job offers from private contractors as well as a position with the City of Dryden as a technologist, Tyler opted for a public works position with Dryden to satisfy his desire to "give back" to his community. Over the next three years Tyler became involved with the North of Superior PWA and in 2019, relocated and accepted the position of Director of Public Works in Atikokan. Even with the COVID -19 pandemic and his new challenges, when called upon, Tyler stepped up to become president and AORS board member for the North of Superior PWA. Tyler replaces Colin Hawkins as the NOSPWA representative as Colin takes on new challenges.

"My time so far with the AORS board of directors has been fantastic and I am excited to see what this organization is capable of achieving in the coming years", Tyler commented.

AORS is pleased to have Tyler join the board and we are confident that his vast knowledge of the industry and his northern Ontario perspective will be very beneficial.



Camila Hidalgo

AORS newest team member

Camila is originally from Colombia and moved to Canada with her husband. To improve her skills in the events industry, she attended the Special Events Planning program at Fanshawe College. In her home country, Camila worked for 2 years as an event planner for a hospital, where she organized educational meetings such as congresses and conferences for the healthcare sector. She also has experience in public relations and influencer marketing.

Camila has been working with the AORS team for 3 months supporting and managing the AORS CONNEXIONS project which is a new interactive platform to connect our members with suppliers offering products and services needed to deliver essential services to the Ontario public. She is excited about this project and its potential to connect supplier and municipal members in our industry. She is glad to have her first job experience in Canada with AORS and is confident she will be able to fulfill all the expectations of her role.

In her free time, Camila enjoys going for walks, and enjoying nature. She also enjoys Latin dance music such as salsa, merengue, champeta and reggaeton.

AORS is very pleased to have Camila as part of the team. Welcome Camila!

AORS update

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

March 11, 2021

So, in a year like no other!

On March 11th AORS held its first virtual annual general meeting (AGM). Despite some pre-meeting jitters, the meeting was a resounding success. There were a few minor technical blips, caused in part by the high number of participants (nearly 120 people signed on), but the meeting proved to be very informative and well received by our members. Supplier member participation was up for this AGM since the OGRA conference went virtual, and the AORS AGM was scheduled on a different date to avoid conflicts. Participants were placed in chat rooms prior to the actual meeting to provide an opportunity for them to catch up with one another.

After a welcome and opening remarks from AORS president Bill Wilson, this year's meeting featured keynote speaker Jim Harris, a renowned futurist, author, and speaker. Jim discussed future trends and technologies in public works and how they effect both rural and urban municipalities, now and into the future.

In a financial report members heard how 2020 was a very challenging year for AORS much like many other associations, but through good management and adaptation as well as tapping into some government funding we completed the year with a relatively small loss and the association remains in a strong financial position.

The education report although positive, showed an expected decline in the number of trainees for 2020. Much work was done in 2020 to develop online courses and things look very positive for 2021. Committee chair Mike Alcock and AORS staff gave a detailed overview of plans for 2021 online courses including the challenges and opportunities available. This will be an area of focus for the association in 2021.

A report on the progress of the strategic plan "An Open Road to Success" was presented to membership. The report stated that some progress was made despite COVID-19 restrictions. Looking ahead plans are in place to extend the life of the strategic plan from 2020-2025 as well as plans to hold a local association workshop in June 2021.

Larry Maddeaux, co-chair of the Spotlight committee also reported many challenges with the publication of the 2021 version of the directory. He reported that the number of ads were down slightly from 2020, that fewer books would be printed, but more would be mailed out since the ability to distribute in person is limited. The transition to a new publisher this year went very well. Larry also thanked the committee for their work and dedication.

Other committee reports reflected the limited activity due primarily to COVID-19 restrictions.

The meeting also featured graduates of the PWLDP, and recipients of the long service awards. AORS also took some time to recognize many of the professional trainers who worked tirelessly to make online training a reality in 2020. These individuals spent many hours adapting our existing courses for online presentation.

Thank you all who attended the meeting and helped to make the best of 2020 despite its challenges. Another example of why AORS is the best public works association out there!

A big thank you to our generous sponsors for the meeting

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continued

AORS update

2021 BOARD MEETINGS

The first two 2021 board of directors' meetings were held virtually on Thursday March 4, 2021, and Friday June 25, 2021. Attendance at both meetings was very good and board members heard reports from various committees and staff.

Members heard how staff and committees, over the last year and a half have been constantly adapting and changing direction to meet the needs of their membership.

The board was encouraged with the changes made to the education program to adapt to COVID-19 while still providing the courses municipal workers need to remain safe and up to date with regulatory changes. In March the finance committee presented a 2021 budget that was approved by the board and projects AORS will come out of this year with another slight loss. However, this is still viewed as an accomplishment considering all the limitations on activities of the association over the course of the year. Due to the efforts and creative thinking of staff and committees it is still possible the association might turn a profit by year end.

The 2021 fall board of directors meeting was held in person at the Oakwood Resort in Grand Bend, hosted by Mike Alcock, first vice president. There were 18 directors, 4 guests and 3 past presidents in attendance and all were very happy to be together for this meeting with COVID-19 protocols in place. There were also 3 directors and 1 staff member attending virtually.

Highlights of the half day meeting included welcoming 6 new board members and discussing committee reports. Overall, the main message of the days was that despite the challenges of the past 18 months, the Association of Ontario Road Supervisors remains very strong, both organizationally and financially.

Board members gather in Grand Bend in September 2021

HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2021 BOARD MEETINGS AND AORS ACTIVITIES

March meeting

1. **Marketing & Communications:** A mandate for the new Marketing & Communications Committee was approved by the BOD. This committee replaces the former Booth & Promotions Committee, but with a broader mandate to include all communications and marketing initiatives. Committee Chair Paul Dalton invites anyone interested to become a member of the committee, in particular those who are active in social media. Due to the cancellation of conferences, trade shows and meetings since March 2020, there were few in-person opportunities for committee members to promote the Association, our training and certification programs, Spotlight and the AORS Trade Show. Instead, AORS has focused on enhancing its virtual presence, with increased email notifications and social media posts. We also participated in several virtual events, with mixed results. Everyone is looking forward to the return of in-person events later this year.
2. **Strategic Plan:** In spite of the pandemic, some progress was made against several of the strategic objectives in the new 2020–2024 Strategic Plan, An Open Road to Success. Most notably, transitioning our training offerings to an online format. Other accomplishments include relocation of the AORS office to St. Marys, hiring of a new Administrative Accounting Assistant, and recognition of the Public Works Leadership Development Program towards the CEU requirements of OACETT and the OWWCO. Since most other initiatives had to be put

on hold during the pandemic, the BOD agreed that the lifespan of the new Strategic Plan should be extended to allow more time to address the strategies, so it will now be the 2020–2025 Strategic Plan.

June meeting

1. **Passing of Past President and CAO, Don Dean:** The Board paid respects to Past President Don Dean who passed away on April 26, 2021. Don represented the Middlesex County Public Works Association and served as AORS President in 1988. Following Don's retirement as Roads Superintendent for London Township, he was hired as the CAO for AORS, a position he held from 1993 to 2001.
2. **Education Committee:** Since most of the spring 2020 training was cancelled, the second quarter training numbers for 2021 were obviously much improved, but still behind the same period in 2019 before the pandemic. Nonetheless, the uptake of the online courses remains strong with positive feedback, and the mix of courses being delivered is generating better financial results. With a few exceptions, fall training is currently being scheduled as live webinars, with the hope that we will be able to transition to in-person training or a hybrid model later in the fall once all restrictions are lifted.
3. **Mentorship Program:** The Board received proposals on a mentorship program. Following discussion, it was decided not to pursue a formal program where an individual is assigned to a mentor for guidance on career development. Instead, the Board recommended a less formal approach where members who have experience in different subject areas could volunteer to serve on an expert panel, which would respond to questions posed by members. AORS will investigate a suitable platform.

September meeting

1. **2022 Spotlight:** Larry Maddeaux, Spotlight Committee Co-chair, reported that the committee has started working on the 2022 edition. Another year with no trade shows or other events has once again made it challenging to generate leads for new ads. Existing advertisers are urged to renew their ads as soon as possible, and all members are encouraged to help by promoting ads to any suppliers they deal with, and receive an entry into a draw for $1000 gift card for each new ad they secure.
2. **Finance Committee:** In spite of the negative impact of cancelling the trade show for a second year, AORS is on track to break even, possibly post a small profit in 2021, thanks to cost control measures, the strong uptake of online training, and the revenues expected from AORS CONNEXIONS.
3. **Roadway Safety Working Group:** The Working Group reported on a survey of board members to prioritize and focus its work on roadway safety issues, such as traffic calming and speed control. Rather than undertake new research or make specific recommendations, the WG will compile lists of resources currently available on topics of concern to our members. The members can then select the reference materials that are most applicable to their particular situation.
4. **Ask an Expert:** The Board endorsed the creation of a LinkedIn group where members can pose questions and others can respond or comment. Instructions and guidelines will be developed
5. **Nominations and Appointments:** The Board approved a second pause in the progression of the executive, to allow Bill Wilson a chance to exercise the full scope of presidential responsibilities, assuming in-person events will open up in 2022. Bill will serve another term as President. Mike Alcock will remain as 1st Vice President, Joe Reid as 2nd Vice President, and Phil Wilson will serve another term as Past President. Larry Maddeaux, CRS-S, Past President, was nominated and approved to serve another 3-year term on the Certification Board starting in 2022.

Upcoming Meetings

6. **The 2022 Winter Board of Directors meeting** and the Annual General Meeting will be held in conjunction with the OGRA Conference, which is scheduled for February 27 to March 2, 2022 at the Royal York in Toronto. The BOD will be held in the afternoon of Sunday, February 27, and the AGM in the afternoon of Monday, February 28.
7. **The summer Board meeting** is tentatively planned for the morning of Friday, June 24. A Local Association meeting is tentatively planned for Thursday, June 23. Both will be held in Barrie or another central location, to be approved at the winter BOD meeting.
8. **The fall Board meeting** is scheduled for Friday, September 16, 2022. The annual Suppliers–Directors meeting and golf will be held on Thursday, September 15, 2022. Both will be held at the Oakwood Resort in Grand Bend.
9. **Local Associations** are urged to avoid the above dates when scheduling their own meetings and events, and coordinate with neighbouring associations to pick dates that avoid conflicts and accommodate Supplier members and AORS staff who travel to attend several meetings in a week.
10. **November 11 is the deadline for applications** to be considered at the next Certification Board meeting.

2021 Virtual LA Workshop

Just like all pre-COVID years, a workshop for local association members was held June 24th, the day prior to the June board of directors meeting. Just like most events over the past 18 months, this was a virtual event.

Despite the fatigue of attending virtual meetings, 34 members representing 23 local associations and 6 staff signed up for the workshop focusing on how AORS can help LAs improve participation in meetings and other events.

A short survey was distributed to all LA executives prior to the event to help shape the discussion of the day. The results of this survey were shared with participants, and they were then broken into groups to focus on specific issues.

Many topics were discussed including the number of meetings held per year, other activities organized by LAs, (roadeos, golf outings, joint meetings) and how LA finances are being handled. The objective of the discussions is to learn from one another and brainstorm how local associations can become more efficient, interesting, and thereby better engage the membership.

Some very good ideas and practices were shared, which participants indicated could be taken back to their local associations and possibly implemented. Comments were positive and it was encouraging to see the free and enthusiastic sharing of ideas.

2021 Suppliers meeting

The first in-person meeting in over 18 months, the annual AORS Suppliers–Directors meeting was well attended, with 34 Suppliers, 18 Directors, 3 Past Presidents, 4 municipal guests and 4 staff. There was a good discussion on how municipalities and suppliers adapted during the pandemic to continue delivering essential services to the public, and how they anticipate things will evolve as we emerge from the pandemic. The potential impact of vaccine mandates was also discussed. While many Local Associations are looking forward to returning to in-person meetings, most will take their cues from the municipalities.

Suppliers were invited to join AORS CONNEXIONS as sponsors, a new platform that will allow them to reconnect with their municipal customers, making up for the cancelled trade shows in 2020 and 2021, and the lack of Local Association meetings over the past 18 months. It will launch in October and remain accessible for at least 2 months, providing ample time for members to check out what's new with the sponsors and participate in live broadcasts.

Suppliers provided good feedback on Spotlight 2021, the first edition published using our new printer. Thanks to all the suppliers who advertise, and a special thanks to those who had already renewed their ads for Spotlight 2022. There were two draws from among the early renewals, one for a complimentary Bronze Sponsorship of AORS CONNEXIONS (won by Green Lea Ag Centre Inc.), and the other for a free ad in Spotlight 2022 (won by Da Lee Dust Control). There was strong support for the option to renew ad space for 3 consecutive years at the current pricing, paid in advance. This will go into effect with the 2022 edition.

1 Mike Alcock, second vice and host of this year's fall meetings welcomes attendees to the suppliers meeting

2 Getting ready to tee off for a friendly round after the meeting were, left to right, AORS past president Darrel Townsend, District 8 RSA, Adam and Louis Cripps of Advantage Data and Joe Reid, second AORS vice president, also from District 8 RSA. Approximately 70 golfers enjoyed 9 holes following the meeting.

LONG SERVICE AWARDS

Although long service plaques cannot be presented in person at this time they are stored away and will be distributed at LA meetings once the pandemic subsides and meetings can resume.

The following is a list of the 2021 recipients of the AORS long service awards. Recipients have been a roads supervisor or manager and a member of their local association for a minimum of 15 years and retired in 2020. Congratulations to all recipients. Although there is a lot of experience walking out the door with the new retirees, these individuals will often remain active LA members, providing volunteer services and great advice to those filling their shoes.

AORS would like to congratulate all recipients. Well deserved recognition!

2021 Long Term Service Award Recipients

NAME	LOCATION	YEARS OF SERVICE
BRUCE BOUGHNER	**Municipality of West Elgin** Elgin County Municipal Supervisors Association	**22 years**
WAYNE HIGGINS	**County of Huron** Huron County Road Supervisors Association	**25 years**
DWIGHT KINSMAN	**Municipality of South Huron** Huron County Road Supervisors Association	**28 years**
RANDY MARRIAGE	**Municipality of Central Huron** Huron County Road Supervisors Association	**21 years**
JOE RYMAN	**Township of Carling** West Parry Sound Road Supervisors Association	**25+ years**
STEPHEN W. SAGE, AORS Past President, 2010	**Township of Clearview** Simcoe County Road Supervisors Association	**31 years**
LAVERN SIEGEL	**City of Pembroke** Renfrew County Road Supervisors Association	**29 years**
TOM SINCLAIR, sadly missed since 07/2020	**Municipality of Central Huron** Huron County Road Supervisors Association	**28 years**
DALE SMALL	**Municipality of Kincardine** Bruce County Public Works Association	**18 years**
ROB STEIGINGA	**County of Lambton** Lambton County Road Supervisors Association	**24 years**

SPOTLIGHT

My cochair Derek Scholten and I are pleased to report that the 35th edition of the Spotlight Directory was successfully launched earlier in the year. It was our first and hopefully last "Pandemic Spotlight Edition" ever to be published.

I said it before and I will repeat it again, the success of this year's Spotlight Magazine can only be accredited to the most dynamic and dedicated Spotlight committee we have ever had. Every committee member should be commended for their dedication and hard work through a very difficult time.

Because of lockdowns, closures, trade show cancelations and government restrictions it was incredibly difficult to address our dedicated and loyal suppliers. But through perseverance and hard work, committee members, with the support of the suppliers, and our new publisher, Spence Print Solutions, we were successful in achieving the following.

A remarkable 3500 copies of Spotlight were printed and 3000 copies were mailed out, consisting of 113 pages of paid ads (236 partial page/56 full page ads). We also welcomed 38 new suppliers.

Our committee members and our loyal and dedicated suppliers did not abandon Spotlight but came through in a difficult time with great success.

We are again calling out to all of you to help us secure new suppliers and repeat ads for our 36th edition of Spotlight. If you have a new supplier or know of a supplier who is not in Spotlight, please do not hesitate to bring it to our attention. Remember, as John Rivers found out, by securing a new ad, your name will be entered into draw to win $1000.00.

John Rivers from Cedar Signs accepted his $1,000 prize from a safe distance, from AORS executive director John Maheu, after having his name drawn from those selling new ads in the Spotlight Directory 2021 edition

continued

AORS update

A NEW WAY FOR MEMBERS TO CONNECT!

AORS CONNEXIONS

LOOK › LISTEN › LEARN

For over 60 years, AORS has been proud to bring our members together. To network, to share their experience, to learn what's new. The pandemic but a damper on that, with the cancellation of two trade shows and Roadeos, most Local Association meetings and other events, and forcing us to go online for training. And while the end is in sight and we should be meeting more in person soon, there is a lot of catching up to do. Not to mention, lot's of people have retired, new staff have come on board, and new products have been launched. With over 2,000 members scattered across the province, it will take time before we can reconnect with everyone. In the meantime, let's take advantage of our increased use of technology to close the gap.

AORS CONNEXIONS is an interactive platform that will bring our members together, both municipal public works managers, supervisors, and their staff; and the suppliers of the equipment, products and services they need to deliver essential services to the Ontario public. Supplier members are invited to become sponsors, and municipal members are welcome to visit at no cost.

Go to the AORS website (aors.on.ca) and click the links to AORS CONNEXIONS. Check out the suppliers that want to share what's new with you. Meet their team that's there to serve you. Join a live broadcast to see a demo or learn about the latest innovations. Set up a time for a one-on-one consultation. And each time you visit a sponsor or join a live broadcast, you'll get a chance to enter for a weekly door prize.

So don't wait. AORS CONNEXIONS will be accessible for a limited time, and our supplier members are anxious to reconnect with you. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or Instagram to hear about our featured sponsors and upcoming live broadcasts. Social media links are on our website.

A big thank you to our sponsors. More sponsors are joining weekly, so be sure to visit often and see what's new.

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AORS MUNICIPAL PUBLIC WORKS TRADESHOW

THE LINEUP

2022
2023
2024

Karla Musso-Garcia, C.E.T.
AORS Director, Simcoe County Roads Supervisor Association

TRADE SHOW 2022

The 2020 trade show that was cancelled and rescheduled to 2021, was unfortunately, postponed an additional year. The subsequent two trade shows were also postponed by another year, so the lineup is now: 2022, Barrie, hosted by the Simcoe County Road Supervisors Association; 2023, Strathroy, hosted by the Middlesex County Public Works Association; and 2024, Cornwall, hosted by the Eastern Ontario Road Supervisors Association. The BOD approved a Virtual Public Works Marketplace, AORS CONNEXIONS, be held later this year to bridge the gap.

The organizing committee for the 2022 Trade Show has reconvened, picking up where they left off when the 2020 show was cancelled. They would be happy to welcome some new volunteers to sit on the committee, since there was some staff turnover among committee members over the last 18 months. Given the 2-year hiatus, we expect the show will be a sellout, so suppliers are urged to reserve space soon if they haven't already.

A few words from your 2022 host committee

"After much anticipation and hitting pause for a few years, we hope the old adage is true, the third time's a charm! Simcoe County Roads Supervisor Association is proud to announce that we will be hosting the 2022 Tradeshow in beautiful Simcoe County at the Sadlon Arena in Barrie (formerly Molson Centre) June 1–2. The AORS tradeshow is the largest tradeshow of its kind in Ontario, and we hope that the central location and access to various amenities will make this the largest to date! Our volunteers are working hard to make this an educational, fun, and safe event where you can see the latest and greatest of public works technologies. You are not going to want to miss this one so plan now to attend. Vendors, please note there are still booths available, Contact AORS to ensure your space for this event!

See you in 2022!

LA News

1961-2021 AORS Celebrates 60 Years

Did you know that 2021 is the 60th anniversary of The Association of Ontario Road Supervisors Association? When the association was started in 1961 who would have dreamt that we would reach such a milestone under these conditions?

AORS 60

2021 Promoting knowledge. Pursuing excellence.

Many great things have been attained through these 60 years and your board of directors would like to recognize this special anniversary properly, so their hope is that in 2022 AORS can celebrate this anniversary, whether it be at the trade show, roadeo, both or some other event. A committee will determine the best course of action in 2022 so stay tuned and watch for further information. In the meantime, help us build up some excitement, show us how much you know about AORS, and you could win!

If you haven't already, like or follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, or Instagram. The links are on our website. Then message us with the answer to this question: Who was the first AORS President, and which Local Association did he represent? Need a hint? The answer is at your fingertips!

Be sure to include #AORS60 in your posts, as well as your name and email address. We will hold a draw from all the correct answers received by December 31, 2021. One entry per person, please. The winner will receive a $100 gift card to their favourite store or restaurant.

Chatham Kent Truck Roadeo

Even though the provincial truck roadeo had to be canceled because local associations were not able to hold their own roadeos this past spring, Chatham Kent decided to hold their local event in mid September in Tilbury. Being a single municipality association, Chatham-Kent was able to manage the participants and separate drivers into cohorts. Hats off to the organizing group that pulled this together. There were 19 participants for the day with Don Jones placing first with 351 of a possible 410 points followed by Randy Mackenzie in second spot with 345 points and Mark Myers with 311 in third. Great job everyone!!

Our 32 Local Associations (LA) are the basic 'close to home' organizational element of AORS.

AORS = COMMUNITY

They offer our members immediate, easy and cost-effective opportunities to:

- Participate in activities and events
- Utilize their right to vote and hold office
- Attend educational programs
- Network with colleagues and peers in a professional setting
- Exchange public works technologies/trends with colleagues, and
- Help support and promote our Association.

These stories are the best examples of the LA contribution to our Association and to our communities!

West Parry Sound RSA Boat Cruise

The West Parry Sound association organized a boat cruise on August 19 with approximately 20 people taking part in the trip. This was one of the first LA functions in person and all enjoyed the outing. Excellent effort by Tom MacLeod and Peter Koppisch to organize the event. It was great to see people in person again!

Golf Outings Starting to Resume

Some local associations were able to hold their annual golf tournaments again with COVID-19 protocols in place. Some were able to manage an outside meal with their day and others simply met up with their foursome at the course and made the best of their day. Again, this shows the flexibility and determination of our LAs and their ability to adapt to an ever-changing environment.

One such outing took place at the Simcoe County RSA in mid-September. Here members attended their first in person meeting in more than a year before hitting the links.

District 8 members also put their signatures on a sign presented to John Farrell, a very dedicated LA member who is fighting some serious health issues. Class act guys!

District 8 RSA also got in a golf outing in late September with about 80 golfers showing up. This LA has always been very active, and members were very excited to get together again and network.

PWAzone

Public Works Academy Training + Professional Certification

TRAINING UPDATE

AORS PUBLIC WORKS ACADEMY

Train here. *Advance anywhere.*

The AORS training program remains very strong despite all of the challenges and changes that we went through in 2020 and into 2021. We are very likely to look back on this past year or so and see some very positive outcomes and developments in the education program. AORS is anticipating coming out of 2021 with a large number of students trained in our high-quality program while improving accessibility in some areas. Here are some thoughts from Michelle Poirier, member services coordinator for AORS and who took the lead in the transition to on line training.

If AORS had surveyed its members 18 months ago and asked them the question, "would you attend an online learning event?", I am quite certain the answers would have had a resounding "NO" in common. Yet here we are, a mere 18 months have passed, and we are living with a marked "before" and "after" reality that will never again allow us to react as we did 18 months ago.

18 months ago, at the various AORS' studios, we were scrambling to try and create online events that would rival our "before" in-person experience. We were as quick to realize that most things "before" were being forced to change. Equipment configurations changed, how we interacted with trainees changed, our instructors were asked to change. Just as individuals, families, businesses, and communities changed, AORS changed as well, adapted, and grew through the experience of it. Painful? Frustrating? Most definitely. But watching the birth of online training, watching the rise of the "after" has been altering.

Will we return to in-person training? Of course, when and how we can, and as soon as we can. But online training has found its place in the "after". For the first time, trainees from all areas of Ontario, were able to meet and share experiences. Trainees who would not have otherwise been able to attend AORS training events, were now able. For us, receiving feedback that all our virtual trainees would choose to attend another AORS live training event, has made the "after" experience expansive. Thank you to everyone who made this transition our new reality.

THE AORS VALUE PROPOSITION

To all those invested in public works training and professional development, AORS aims to meet the needs of our members by providing the following:

AORS ⇒ EXPERTISE

- 60+ training courses designed and delivered through a variety of options/formats
- Cooperative Local Association/LA (i.e. close-to-home) programs to reduce fees for courses, seminars and professional development programs
- Customized adult 'peer to peer' learning experiences to accommodate specific needs
- Strategic cooperative agreements with other professional and private sector organizations (e.g. OGRA, SWANA) to deliver a wide range of cost-effective, high-quality programs
- Volunteer Education Committee and Certification Board to organize and approve all training and professional development programs
- Professional training and human resource development staff committed to quality control and on-going improvement
- Public works career professional development paths with clear guidelines to ensure verification of public works expertise and improved employability

TRAINING AND EDUCATION RECOGNITION

In a typical year, which 2020 definitely was not, AORS would recognize individuals who go above and beyond to help our association bring vital and cost-effective training to their local areas. In 2021 staff and the education committee felt that the recognition should be focused on the outstanding work done by our professional trainers who committed countless hours to convert our core training programs to live online offerings. These individuals put in many hours assisting with the development of training techniques that ensured our courses contained the same materials but could be delivered virtually. Or in the case of chain saw and in-seat equipment operator training that still had to be delivered in-person, being able to do so in compliance with COVID restrictions.

Although not pictured here the staff of Ground Force should be acknowledged for their work in converting their large offering of courses to be online compatible. They have also made this transition appear seamless for our municipal members.

We'd also like to introduce two new PWLDP instructors in 2021: Ewen MacDonald, Past President and recently retired from the Township of South Glengarry; and Michael Touw, CAO, Town of Perth.

1 LEE ANNE DOYLE PWLDP
2 GREG PFAFF Chainsaw Safety
3 SANDRA MCKENZIE PWLDP
4 CRAIG DAVIDSON PWLDP
5 DAN FERGUSON Traffic Control
6 EWEN MACDONALD Past President
5 MICHAEL TOUW CAO, Town of Perth

60+ TRAINING PROGRAMS

1700+ MEMBERS IN ONTARIO

$ SAVE ON TRAINING & EDUCATION

2020 GRADS

PWLDP

Below is a list of individuals who graduated from the Public Works Leadership Development Program (PWLDP) in 2020. These people have completed all eight modules of the program, some in just a couple of years and some over several.

Name	Municipality
COX, Joel	**City of Kawartha Lakes**
DALGLEISH, Jason	**Town of Smiths Falls**
INGLIS, Glen	**City of Guelph**
PAUL, Bob	**City of Hamilton**
PETERSEN, Anthony	**City of Woodstock**
RUSSO, Michael	**City of Mississauga**
SHARPE, Casey	**Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake**
THOMAS, Sean	**Town of Goderich**
WACHOWIAK, Mark	**City of London**

They are all worthy of a tip of the hat for persevering through the pandemic and completing the program. These individuals have undoubtedly improved their leadership skills through this program and will become great leaders in the public works field.

Congratulations to you all for a job well done!!

MARVIN D. HALLIDAY MEMORIAL AWARD

Every year the student with the highest average mark in all eight modules combined is awarded the Marvin D. Halliday Memorial Award. This is quite an accomplishment since the winner is always up against some very stiff competition within their graduating group. This year's winner with an overall average of 92 % is Jason Dalgleish from the Town of Smiths Falls. *Well done Jason!*

AORS PUBLIC WORKS ACADEMY

Train here. *Advance anywhere.*

"I was quite impressed with the content of the courses; I felt the small group workshops kept individuals engaged as I met new people from municipalities small and large. Kudos to AORS for being forced online and still putting together a great course"

Mike Russo, City of Mississauga.

ALL LANES OPEN TO YOUR PUBLIC WORKS CAREER

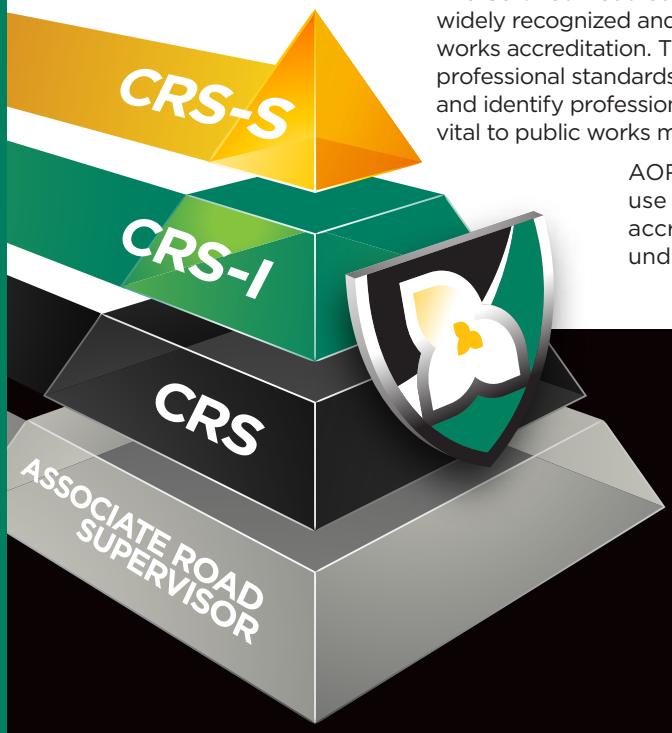
5 BENEFITS OF BEING A REGULATED PROFESSION

CRS

1. Confirms the importance of the profession
2. Increases public trust in the profession
3. Increases career opportunities in the marketplace
4. More consultation by government on related policy issues
5. More credibility as public works experts

CRS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

education+experience



The Certified Road Supervisor (CRS) is a legislated, widely recognized and highly successful professional public works accreditation. The CRS program is designed to raise professional standards, improve individual performance, and identify professionals who demonstrate the knowledge vital to public works management.

AORS has the exclusive right to use the CRS designation. Our accreditation program is recognized under provincial statute law.

Who is eligible for the CRS?

If you are an employee within the private/municipal sector hired to supervise construction, rehabilitation or maintenance of core civil public works infrastructure, you are eligible to apply for AORS CRS public works professional development accreditation.

5 STEPS TO CERTIFICATION

1. Gain hands-on supervisory experience in the public works industry
2. Expand your experience with training
3. Decide which certification applies to you: complete the application
4. Display your CRS certificate and Code of Ethics
5. Progress to the next level of certification

PWAzone

The Provincially recognized designation of Certified Road Supervisor (CRS) is well recognized and respected throughout the public works industry in Ontario. Each quarter the AORS certification board considers applications from public works professionals to obtain their CRS designation. The various levels of certification require certain supervisory experience as well as designated courses. AORS in cooperation with OGRA have strived to make these courses available through the pandemic to allow individuals to continue to pursue their CRS certification or to advance to higher levels of certification. The following lists represent those individuals who have been granted certification or reclassification over the last year.

Congratulations to all!!

1765 TOTAL CERTIFIED

TO AUGUST 2021

(including Associate Members)

CERTIFIED AT CERTIFICATION BOARD MEETING

December 10, 2020

Kevin A. Murray
Township of McNab Braeside ..... CRS

David Cracknell City of Guelph ..... CRS

Steven Lewis
City of Kawartha Lakes ..... CRS

Adam Knapp
Township of Horton ..... CRS

Tom Kelly County of Lambton ..... CRS-S

Kyle Harrison Town of Oakville ..... CRS-I

Anthony Petersen
City of Woodstock ..... CRS-I

Kevin Vande Beek Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury ..... CRS-I

Glen Inglis City of Guelph ..... CRS-I

Bill Peever Norfolk County ..... CRS-I

Dennis Peplinskie
City of Brampton ..... CRS

Chad Archibald City of London ..... CRS

Terry Bangs Township of Manitouwadge ..... Assoc. R.S.

Justin Bishop City of Oshawa ..... CRS-I

Thomas W. Dewar
City of Barrie ..... Assoc. R.S.

Aaron Hatton
Twp. of South Frontenac ..... Assoc. R.S.

Scott Hutchinson
City of Burlington ..... CRS

Matt Koevoets City of Burlington ..... CRS

Bert Leach
Canadian Nuclear Laboratories ..... CRS

Tom Macleod Township of Seguin ..... CRS

Chris MacIsaac
City of Pickering ..... Assoc. R.S.

Andrew Marshall
Town of Bracebridge ..... CRS

Matthew John Noble
Town of Mono ..... CRS

Adam Sokoloski
Town of Tecumseh ..... Assoc. R.S.

Greg Stewart Township of North Dundas ..... Assoc. R.S.

Michael Vos Town of Georgina ..... CRS

CERTIFIED AT CERTIFICATION BOARD MEETING

March 17, 2021

Jessie Palmer County of Simcoe ... CRS

Derek Young Town of Pelham ..... CRS

Daniel Naccarato Town of Aurora ..... CRS

Jason Condon
Township of Douro-Dummer ..... CRS

Dan Scholman
City of St. Catharines ..... CRS

Brandon Brisson Regional Municipality of Niagara ..... CRS-I

Stephen Lalonde U. C. of Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry ..... CRS-I

Jason Drummond
U. C. of Leeds & Grenville ..... CRS-I

Daniel Brady Nolan
Township of Howick ..... CRS-I

Robert McGill City of St. Thomas .... CRS-I

Jamie Britt City of Brampton ..... Assoc. R.S.

Franco Massacci City of Brampton ... CRS

Daniel Crawford
Town of Milton ..... Assoc. R.S.

Alex Frank Town of Milton ..... Assoc. R.S.

Paul Helden
Township of Oro-Medonte ..... CRS

Scott Thomson
Township of Oro-Medonte ..... CRS

Andrew Coghill Town of LaSalle ..... CRS-I

Patrick Cole City of Guelph ..... Assoc. R.S.

Alex Companion
County of Simcoe ..... Assoc. R.S.

Kevin Duchesne City of Cornwall ..... CRS

Donald Hastings
County of Huron ..... Assoc. R.S.

Ken Hoard City of Belleville ..... Assoc. R.S.

Scott Legassie
Town of Oakville ..... Assoc. R.S.

Barry McIntyre
County of Renfrew ..... CRS

James Moore City of Hamilton ..... CRS

Jason Dalgleish
Town of Smiths Falls ..... CRS-I

Curtis O'Brien
U. C. of Leeds & Grenville ..... CRS

Dan Perri
City of Sault Ste. Marie ..... Assoc. R.S.

William Pugsley
Norfolk County ..... Assoc. R.S.

Marius Robidas
Municipality of East ..... CRS

Steve Visinski
Township of Admaston/Bromley .... CRS

Barry Walker
Municipality of Temagami ..... Assoc. R.S.

Murray D. Wickerson
Municipality of Dutton Dunwich ... CRS-I

Curtis Hammond
City of Mississauga ..... CRS

Terry Bangs
Township of Manitouwadge ..... CRS

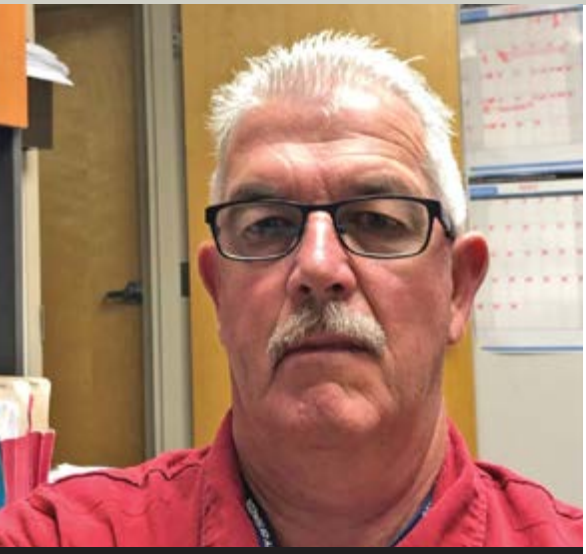
Barry Gray U. C. of Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry ..... CRS-I

CERTIFIED AT CERTIFICATION BOARD MEETING

June 16, 2021

Tony Auburger Town of Orangeville ..... CRS

Brian Wyatt
City of Port Colborne ..... CRS



TED INCH, CRS-S COUNTY OF SIMCOE

"Obtaining my CRS-S designation was a very proud moment for me and one of my career goals. The AORS certification program is a valuable resource for a successful road supervisor, and I highly recommend the program"

TOM KELLY, CRS-S COUNTY OF LAMBTON

"A CRS- Senior designation shows a member's commitment to education. The courses are informative and relevant to Public Works. Having a CRS-S designation is valued by employers as well, it shows a candidate values the training and education required to acquire the designation and perform their duties"

Ted Inch County of Simcoe ..... CRS-S
Darwin Nolan
County of Lanark ..... CRS-S
Chris Coleman County of Grey ..... CRS-I
Norman Nussio Town of Essex ..... CRS-I
Jan Peter Stroebel
Town of Oakville ..... CRS-I
Joseph Angell
County of Grey ..... Assoc. R.S.
Daniel Elchuk
County of Grey ..... Assoc. R.S.
Mitchel Barkley U. C. of Stormont,
Dundas & Glengarry ..... Assoc. R.S.
Scott Bond
County of Norfolk ..... Assoc. R.S.
Mike Christian City of Brantford .... CRS
Scott Franks City of North Bay ..... CRS
Cory Henry
Township of Southgate ..... CRS
Darren Ives
County of Lambton ..... Assoc. R.S.
Phillip Laurin City of Oshawa ..... CRS
Patrick Maffei City of Hamilton ..... CRS
Andy McNicol City of Hamilton ..... CRS
John Marshall
City of Brockville ..... Assoc. R.S.
Travis Shepherd
City of Brockville ..... Assoc. R.S.
Dale De Jong
City of Brockville ..... Assoc. R.S.
Russ McFarlane
Township of Tyendinaga ..... Assoc. R.S.
Brent Pascoe
Township of Tyendinaga ..... Assoc. R.S.
Adam McDonald City of Kington ..... CRS
Paul Nicol
Town of New Tecumseth ..... Assoc. R.S.
Eddie Pereira
Township of Woolwich ..... Assoc. R.S.
Glenn Russell
Town of Fort Erie ..... Assoc. R.S.
Brendan Skirrow
Emcon Services Inc ..... Assoc. R.S.
Shaun Walker Town of Ajax ..... CRS
Darren Willand
City of St. Thomas ..... Assoc. R.S.
Patrick Cole City of Guelph ..... CRS

CERTIFIED AT CERTIFICATION BOARD MEETING

August 25, 2021

Andrew Sousa City of Mississauga .... CRS
Danny Blatenszky
County of Prince Edward ..... CRS
Jonathon M. Hardy
Township of Adjala/Tosorontio ..... CRS
David Stoner Town of Milton ..... CRS
Thomas Rollins Town of Bancroft ..... CRS
Matthew Coleman Town of Bradford
West Gwillimbury ..... CRS-S
Brad Swift
Township of Centre Wellington ..... CRS-I
David Armstrong
Municipality of Highlands East ..... CRS-I
Scott Cameron Township of
Drummond/North Elmsley ..... CRS-S
Jeff Fiske County of Grey ..... Assoc. R.S.
Tanner Glanville
Municipality of Huron East ..... CRS
Kyle Goss Township of
Centre Wellington ..... Assoc. R.S.
Scott Thomson
Township of Oro-Medonte ..... CRS-I

The next deadline for applications, to be considered at the December certification board meeting is November 13, 2021.

Did you know that the first CRS-S awarded in Ontario was Ron Gelderland who was with the Chatham Kent RSA, in 1989? Ron Retired from Chatham Kent in 2006.

PWAzone

AORS PUBLIC WORKS ACADEMY

Train here. *Advance anywhere.*

Students William McCallum and Chelsea Beriault are shown here with Eastern Ontario Training Board member Ashley Menard

Many municipalities across Ontario have been struggling over the past few years to find qualified operators to fill vacancies left by retiring workers. This problem has been very persistent in Eastern Ontario and in order to address this issue the Eastern Ontario Road Supervisors Association joined forces with the Eastern Ontario Training Board. To date the two groups have made great headway in the past couple of years. The following article submitted by Ewen MacDonald and Ashley Menard shows how they are tackling the situation.

SKILLS ADVANCE Ontario

PUBLIC WORKS

Inroads are starting to be made to address the demand for skilled operators in public works in the Eastern Ontario Road Supervisors Association (EORSA) Region that includes the City of Cornwall and surrounding area of United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry (SDG) and Prescott and Russell United Counties (PR).

Analysis of labour market data and consultation with members of the EORSA confirmed the labour market demand for public works maintenance equipment operators both locally and across Ontario. A 5-year human resource strategy was developed focusing on attracting youth to the sector, skills development for current employees and succession planning.

To address immediate demand, the Eastern Ontario Training Board and EORSA representatives in the City of Cornwall, SDG and PR, with the support of the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD), launched the SkillsAdvance Ontario–Public Works program in November 2019.

The SkillsAdvance Ontario is a pilot initiative that supports partnerships connecting employers with employment and training services necessary to recruit and advance workers with the technical and interpersonal skills required by employers. Participants are then connected with employers for a monitored work placement term. More information about SkillsAdvance Ontario is available at http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/sao.html.

Since its launch, the Eastern Ontario Training Board and their partners have delivered six intakes of ten participants per intake. Students obtain the training necessary to obtain a DZ truck driving accreditation as well as additional certifications such as a 2-day snow operator training facilitated by the Association of Ontario Road Supervisors (AORS), and delivered by Ground Force Training Inc. to ensure they receive the basic knowledge for safe operation of a snow plow.

Forty-three, or more than 84% of the 51 successful trainees, are now either employed or have returned to school. Those who are not directly employed in municipal public works secured employment as private sector plow operators, tow operators, delivery truck drivers or construction operators/labourers.

The success of trainees in obtaining employment, the interest of people now seeking employment and the support of employers within municipal public works has been outstanding and as a result, further intakes outside of Cornwall are in the works with Ontario service providers in Kingston, Peterborough, and in Prescott Russell (French Course).

These service providers are all experienced with the delivery of SkillsAdvance Ontario programming. Promotion and recruitment activities are underway in each community.

AORS will continue to work with the EOTB to facilitate and promote this training program as it continues in the Eastern Ontario Road Supervisors Region as well as the expansion of the program to other local association regions. AORS staff and members are now in the process of trying to facilitate this type of program with other local training boards and training centers.

For more information about this initiative, please contact:
Ashley Menard
Eastern Ontario Training Board
ashley@eotb-cfeo.on.ca
or (613) 932-0210

Article contributed by
Ewen MacDonald

Artificial Intelligence Technologies Supporting Road Maintenance

Artificial Intelligence ("AI") and machine learning technologies have played a rapidly growing role in the global transportation sector.

Typically, when people think of AI and transportation, they think of self-driving cars, a technology that has already been integrated in some vehicles today allowing them to change lanes, avoid potholes, and even drive autonomously. There are similar AI technologies that have been deployed in vehicles which, instead, are being used to automate the detection and reporting of a variety of road infrastructure issues.

With road maintenance being such a crucial component of road safety, Ontario sets standards for the maintenance of roadways using O. Reg 239/02 Minimum Maintenance Standards and its amendments. Cities and municipalities work to comply with these standards by constantly maintaining our roads from plowing and salting in the winter to filling potholes, removing debris, and repairing damaged signs. The continuous developments in these technologies give Ontario municipalities the opportunity to use technologies such as road patrol software, artificial intelligence, and work order systems to better comply with the standards.

The City of Markham is one of the first cities in Ontario to embrace the use of artificial intelligence for city services as part of their "Digital Markham" strategy, which sets a foundation for digital innovation, collaboration and partnerships among citizens, businesses, and government. The city partnered with an Ontario based firm, Visual Defence, on the development of a technology called ROVER, which aims at helping patrol drivers identify issues noted in the Ontario Minimum Maintenance Standard.

The technology is deployed as a smartphone app that uses AI and machine learning to scan roads for potholes, identifying them and simultaneously uploading the information, such as, the GPS coordinates, pictures of incidents and more to a cloud while patrollers drive their routes. "It allows our patrol drivers to focus on more issues day and night", says Dennis King, Road Operations Supervisor at the City of Markham. "The in-vehicle use is fully automated, and our patrol drivers can simply turn on the vehicle and be on their way".

Prior to the use of this technology, patrol staff needed to focus on locating a long list of deficiencies while simultaneously focusing on driving. The staff members would have to safely stop the vehicle and log the issues using a pen and paper system. With the use of this technology, the city has experienced up to 400% improvement in pothole reporting (depending on road and traffic conditions) while reducing vehicle stops and manual entry of incidents. The estimated value of time saved per device is $36,400 per year. Meanwhile, repair crews have instant access to repair priority deficiencies in the city through the cloud allowing them to immediately address the issues.

"The benefits of smart city technologies such as ROVER for road patrol functions are immense." Says Barry Budhu, Senior Manager at the City of Markham. "The system helps us quickly and thoroughly identify deficiencies; allowing us to execute timely improvements in order to maintain compliance with the Ontario Minimum Maintenance Standards. This data-focused approach helps fine-tune our annual budgeting; improving our overall performance in the lifecycle management of our road assets."'

The continuous development of AI technologies will provide cities with endless opportunities. The City of Markham intends to continue to lead by implementing the latest technological developments to support their staff in performing everyday tasks.

Article provided by Milène Fabrizio of Visual Defence Inc.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

You've likely noticed that we scaled back the number of issues of the ADVANCE newsletter, from 2 to 1, for 2020 and 2021. In part as a cost saving measure, but also because there have been so few events at the local or provincial level, which make up a significant part of a typical edition. We're looking forward to when things get back to normal and our members will be submitting more stories and pictures for future editions, and back to twice yearly.

Speaking of back to normal, when I wrote this piece for the Fall 2020 issue, I wondered how we would look back on the pandemic 6 months or a year from then, when it would all be behind us. Like many others, I was naively optimistic that vaccines would soon be approved and would be the silver bullet we needed to end this grief. Well, a year has passed and we're not quite there yet. Yes, things are much better than they were, and the fourth wave seems to be faltering, at least here in Ontario. But other jurisdictions continue to struggle, and new variants remain the wild card. I've learned my lesson; I've put my crystal ball away and I'll let the experts predict the future.

Having said that, we still must plan for the future, however uncertain it is. Another thing I've learned over the last 18 months is that we must be resilient and adaptable to weather storms like these. For our municipal members, that's a motto they've always lived by. Whatever curveballs Mother Nature may throw them, however the political winds may shift, our members always adapt so they can continue delivering essential services on which we all depend. The pandemic was no different. Likewise, our supplier members who provide the equipment, products and services our municipalities need to do their part, also delivered. Thank you to all of them, and congratulations for a job well done!

AORS also had to adapt so we could continue supporting our members, both in the short and long term. I was pleased at how well our members adopted online training, whether by choice or necessity. No doubt the majority prefer in-person training. But there is a segment of our membership that embraced online training, since it opened training opportunities for their staff that, pre-pandemic, were out of reach due to the time and cost associated with travelling to courses, or the challenge of assembling a large enough cohort to make an onsite course cost effective. While we eagerly look forward to doing more in-person training as it becomes feasible, we will also continue to offer online options for those who prefer that format.

Another thing that AORS takes pride in is bringing people together, to network, to build relationships, to expand their knowledge. Whether it's at a Local Association meeting, the tradeshow, the Roadeo, or in a classroom, our members naturally gravitate to one another. The pandemic severely limited that. We had no choice but to postpone the tradeshow and Roadeo two years running. A few of our Local Associations held virtual meetings, with mixed success, while most decided to wait things out. We held our Board and Committee meetings virtually, and most members were quick to adapt. Our first virtual AGM this March was a success, in spite of some technical glitches. Turnout was as large as some recent in-person AGMs! Yes, we are all anxious to get back to in-person meetings. Nonetheless, the pandemic has shown us that we can offer the option to participate virtually where it makes sense, effectively making our Board and Committee meetings accessible and more inclusive for members from across the province.

With restrictions easing we're likely to see more Local Associations call in-person meetings in the coming months. Others may wait for the fourth wave to be over and the dust to settle, many taking their cues from the municipalities they serve. In any case, it will be some time before we get back to the full schedule of Local Association meetings and other events. As events are planned, I want to remind Local Association executives to check with their neighboring associations and the AORS calendar to avoid conflicts, and make it easy for your supplier members to attend as many meetings as possible.

Planning for the next tradeshow has resumed. Save the date: June 1 & 2, 2022, at the Sadlon Arena in Barrie. After a 2-year hiatus, we expect it will be very well attended, both by exhibitors and visitors. But it's still 8 months away. To help us bridge the gap, we have launched AORS CONNEXIONS, a virtual platform to help our supplier and municipal members reconnect. Meet some new faces, see the latest in products and services, ask questions, arrange for a demo. And yes, there will be door prizes! If you haven't already, check it out and register to be included in the weekly draws. You can access it from the AORS home page at aors.on.ca.

In closing, I want to thank our Directors for their guidance, all our members for their support and patience, and our staff for their hard work and perseverance. Here's looking ahead to 2022!

John Maheu
Executive Director

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued from page 1

> **"I believe AORS is coming out of the pandemic even stronger than it was and will continue to assist municipal public works professionals to improve their skills, access current information and serve the public to the best of their ability."**

the door for AORS to offer training and courses to virtually all areas of the province effectively expanding the reach to all corners. It also provides training to smaller municipalities without their having to travel to larger centres. These are important added benefits to both the association and its membership, and I see a great opportunity to continue the momentum.

Another noteworthy positive observation is the collaboration, and successes realized by our various committees. These committees were able to adapt with the changing landscape and turn ideas into results that have benefitted the association and its membership. From Spotlight to marketing, these committee members, and all board members made real gains in delivering services and the progression will serve the association well going forward.

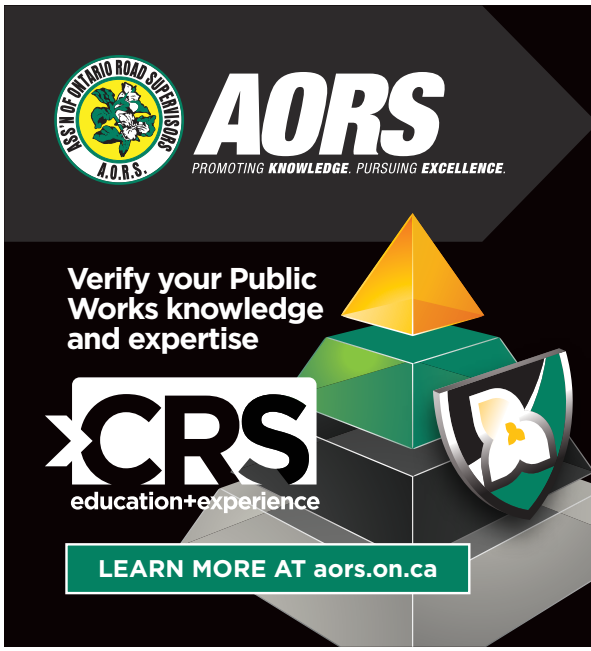
AORS has seen many challenges to the services we offer our members. Like everyone else we had to adapt how we conducted meetings, training, certification, and networking. What are your observations of how board members managed and continue to manage their responsibilities to create opportunities for the membership?

It comes as no surprise to me that our board members remained engaged and committed as we navigated and adapted to the changing environment. Each board member brings a different element to the table and there's a lot of knowledge and experience to draw from. We are also fortunate enough to have knowledgeable staff at AORS to support and facilitate this. We knew there were going to be hiccups along the way, but I think that the group did a fantastic job of managing and prioritizing the work required to meet the needs of the membership. It was also very interesting to see how local association executives are adapting to their individual situations and finding ways to conduct business and continue operations, be it virtually, smaller socially distanced meetings or a mixture of the two.

What do you see ahead for AORS over the next year and beyond?

Well, over the next year for AORS I see the association building on the experiences we've had over the previous year and a half. We're looking forward to the return of the tradeshow next June after a 2-year hiatus and the Simcoe County group will be the perfect host to kick-start the event back into an annual cycle. I see more and more networking opportunities for our membership, whether it be though training, local association meetings, workshops, or social events. All very positive things.

AORS will continue to evolve with the municipal world and ensure that our membership is provided opportunities for public works professionals to exchange ideas, increase professional proficiency and performance for themselves, their municipalities, and companies. I believe AORS is coming out of the pandemic even stronger than it was and will continue to assist municipal public works professionals to improve their skills, access current information and serve the public to the best of their ability.



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