



Guidelines for a successful Local Association Joint Meeting

The strategic planning committee and representatives from several local associations met in 2014 and agreed on eight priorities for the AORS 2015 - 2019 Strategic Plan, The Road to Excellence. Two of these priorities are:

3) Strengthen our *Communication & Advocacy* Capabilities

4) Help our *Local Associations* increase and engage their membership

The group agreed almost unanimously that joint meetings help boost attendance at meetings, provide renewed interest in local associations (LAs), and help raise their profile among local municipal leaders.

The following are guidelines developed in cooperation with the Strategic Planning Committee, which could help kick off or to improve joint meetings between neighboring LAs. The following are meant as suggestions or best practices to help organizers of joint meetings while considering such things as local association preferences and practices.

- 1.** Plan your meeting well ahead of the intended date. Should be a minimum of 8 to 10 months in advance. Send a 'Save the Date' to participating LAs at this point. Ensure the date and location get posted on the AORS web site well in advance so others can avoid conflicts and potential attendees can save the date.
- 2.** Check to ensure there are no conflicts with other activities that may affect your event (other municipal meetings, Local Association meetings that may cause conflicts for suppliers, related trade shows, conferences, training seminars, etc.)

3. Invite senior municipal officials and politicians. Keeping them educated about your local association and AORS will help gain their support when needed. Send letters to Local councils and remind members to talk to their Councilors and senior staff well in advance of the event, to encourage their attendance.
4. Also consider asking the mayor or his/her representative to make opening remarks. A good way to convince them to attend.
5. Plan for and engage speakers well in advance of your meeting. Good keynote speakers will improve attendance dramatically. The keynote speaker's subject matter does not have to be public works specific but must be something that will draw participants to the meeting. The more participants that attend the meeting, the better the networking will be, which benefits everyone.
6. Have presenters with topics that engage the elected officials and municipal staff if they are invited. It is a good idea for elected officials to hear about the municipal liability that their staff face each day as well as the benefits of staff belonging to AORS. Interesting speakers such as the presentation on the Cold War Submarine being showcased in Port Burwell and Dave Phillips, Head Meteorologist for Environment Canada are examples as well as Nathaniel Barr, professor of creativity and creative thinking from Sheridan College. Check with AORS if you need help finding speakers.
7. A small registration fee would be well worth the cost of getting a good speaker. A paid registration fee also encourages commitment and will improve attendance. Even if there is no cost, registration should be done to keep tabs on the number of anticipated attendees.
8. Hosting should rotate between participating LAs and may create a little healthy competition to improve on previous efforts. It also spreads out the workload and keeps fresh ideas flowing as well as giving host municipalities the opportunity to showcase their facilities and organizing skills. Try to keep in mind the travel time required by all when choosing the venue.

9. Strike a committee to spread the workload. Don't rely on the LA Executive or a few dedicated individuals to do all the work.
10. Invite executives from "fringe" or nearby associations, or associations who have not been involved with joint meetings. This may encourage further participation in their area or they may get involved in yours.
11. Because of the larger and more diverse audience, joint meetings are a good place to present awards, certificates, bursaries, etc. A great opportunity to raise the profile of the associations and AORS.
12. These meetings should not be used to conduct normal business. This should be done at a normal local association meeting.
13. Keep supplier members apprised of dates times and opportunities as they are usually eager to attend and quite willing to help or support where needed. These suppliers are normally eager to participate in small trade shows which could help offset the cost of some keynote speakers.
14. ALL LOCAL MEMBERS MUST MAKE THIS MEETING A PRIORITY. A lot of work goes into putting a joint meeting together and they can be very beneficial to all but **only if the local membership participates fully**. It is very difficult to encourage suppliers, senior staff and politicians to participate if our membership does not support the meeting.
15. **YOUR ATTENDANCE AT THESE MEETINGS IS CRITICAL TO THEIR SUCCESS!**

These guidelines are suggestions only. Adopt those that make the most sense for your LAs. Don't hesitate to contact AORS for additional support or advice. Also, please provide any suggestions on how these guidelines can be improved.