



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE LOCAL ASSOCIATION WORKSHOP AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Held June 24 and 25, 2021, by videoconference

For AORS Update at Local Association Meetings

1. Local Association Workshop

- The workshop was held by videoconference on June 24, the day before the annual June Board of Directors meeting. The topic of the Workshop was how AORS can support our Local Associations as we emerge from the pandemic.
- All Local Association executive members were invited to participate. A total of 33 members and 6 staff attended, representing 23 Local Associations in total.
- Prior to the workshop, a brief survey was sent to all invitees to solicit input on how the different LAs operate, how they managed through the pandemic, and what they see as their biggest challenges going forward. Responses from 15 LAs were received.
- During the workshop, participants reviewed the survey results, prioritized what they believed were their biggest challenges, and shared some best practices on how to deal with them and other issues.
- The key topics discussed were how to engage more members to participate in Local Association meetings and events, the benefits of holding a local Roadeo, and how a Local Association's constitution can help to encourage smoother operations.
- The existing Guidelines to Improving Member Engagement will be updated to incorporate the recommendations from the workshop, as well as the Guidelines for organizing a Roadeo, and these will be recirculated to all the LA Executives. AORS will also investigate setting up a repository of LA Constitutions that others can reference, and make recommendations on some best practices.

2. Board of Directors Meeting

- The BOD meeting was held by videoconference on June 25. There were 18 directors present, and 3 guests, as well as 6 staff. The following highlight the key discussion points.

3. 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.

4. Spotlight – Since there have been no in-person events at which to distribute copies of Spotlight or solicit new ads since February 2020, publication of the 2021 edition was delayed by several months to allow more time to generate leads and to expand the mailing lists so more copies could be delivered by direct mail rather than at meetings and events. Additional copies can be requested from the office. The Spotlight Committee has started working on the 2022 edition and is once again asking all members to refer any suppliers they deal with who aren't Spotlight advertisers, since 2021 is turning out to be another difficult year to generate leads. Sell an ad to a new supplier, and you could win a prize! All ads are included in both the print edition and the [online Directory of Products and Services](#), so advertisers get twice the exposure for one low price. Spotlight Committee Co-Chair Larry Maddeaux thanked all the committee members for their hard work.

5. **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.
6. **Snowplow operator training** – A cooperative effort with the Eastern Ontario Training Board to recruit and train new snowplow operators has proven very successful, and is being expanded to other parts of the Eastern Region. Discussions have been initiated with the Labour Market Group to explore replicating the program for the Parry Sound and Nipissing districts.
7. **AORS Provincial Safety Truck Roadeo** – Since few Local Associations planned on holding local roadeos this year, it was decided to cancel the Provincial Championship for a second year. District 8, who would have hosted, will now host the 2022 Provincial Roadeo in Napanee.
8. **Advance Newsletter** – With no spring events to report on, and to control costs, the spring edition of the Advance Newsletter was cancelled again for 2021. Plans are to proceed with a fall edition. Members and Local Associations are encouraged to share any news or events that would be of interest to your fellow members.
9. **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.
10. **Finances** – Cancellation of the Trade Show for a second year will impact revenues once again. But with the transition to and strong uptake of online training, financial results for 2021 will be much improved compared to 2020, and we may possibly break even.

11. **Upcoming Meetings**

In anticipation that meeting restrictions will be lifted, the next meeting of the Board of Directors is being planned for the Town of Grand Bend on September 17, 2021, preceded by the annual Suppliers / Directors meeting and golf on September 16. All supplier members are invited to participate. Contact the office for details.

As meeting restrictions are lifted, Local Associations will be anxious to return to in-person meetings, golf tournaments and other events and make up for lost time. Local Association Executive members are encouraged to consult the AORS calendar and coordinate with neighbouring LAs to avoid conflicting dates in the same region, and where possible, schedule meetings on consecutive dates so Supplier members and AORS staff can attend as many meetings as possible while making efficient use of their travel time.