

## Using New Council Orientations to showcase your Public Works Department

By Joe Reid, City of Belleville

Council Orientations are a key opportunity for Road Professionals to promote their departments and highlight the important services they provide to their communities. Talk to your Clerk and schedule some time with your new council. Remember Public works superheroes help keep communities strong by providing an infrastructure of services in transportation, water, wastewater and storm-water treatment, public buildings and spaces, parks and grounds, emergency management and first response, solid waste, and right-of-way management. They are what make our communities great places to live and work. We are the “Public Works First Responders” here in Ontario!

Keys to a successful Public Works Orientation for the new Council.....

1. Plan early – having your presentations in place early is a key to delivering a solid message and selling ourselves. Make sure you identify what the goals of the Orientation are, right from the beginning, by making a list of content you want to communicate to your new council.
2. Items to Include in the Orientation should be on topics such as, but not limited to:
  - Roles and responsibilities of staff and Organizational Structure of department
  - Level of service provided
  - Decision making process
  - Legislative Environment we work within
  - Opportunities
3. Other items that can be included in an Orientation: Budgeting, Leadership Skills, Professional Development, Succession Planning, Engaging the Public, Customer Service, how your department works with other stakeholders, and a commitment to foster strong Council -Staff relations.
4. Talk about the past, current issues and future opportunities. Again, sell your department!!!
5. It is great to offer them a ride along and go with staff for a day. See what it's like to be an operator during a snowstorm, or have them tour facilities you operate.
6. Also talk about how professional organizations, such as AORS or OGRA help members through training and certification, and networking opportunities to gain the knowledge, confidence, and best practices to achieve the goals of council.