



President's Report – Spring 2020

To say 2020 has been an interesting year might be considered an understatement.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everything we do in all aspects of our lives. We were asked to stay home to give the health care system a fighting chance to prepare for the worst and help those who needed it. We were asked to stay home and find new ways to work, stay connected, and take care of ourselves. Saskatchewan people listened.

The impact on our role as building officials has been significant. The construction industry continued. But how we filled our role changed for all of us. New processes and tools became necessary. Part of the balance between staying safe, doing our part, and assuring code compliance while not holding up an important piece of the economy when many industries were made to shut down. We adapted.

The impact on your association has been obvious. The Spring Conference had to be cancelled on short notice. Thanks goes out to our Committee Chair and Host Committee in Warman for a smooth back-out. We will keep Warman on our list for a conference soon.

FUTURE EVENTS:

The Board of Directors have kept discussions on events and projects moving forward. Like everyone else working to stay connected, this has been done electronically through texts, emails and video conferences. One of our big decisions was how to approach any future conferences and training. The decision has been made to not move forward with a Fall Conference. With so many uncertainties about the open Saskatchewan plan, and recognizing the pandemic has not gone away, it would not have made sense to risk resources and ask people to commit to a fall function. We are keeping an eye on winter training with an understanding we may need to limit classroom sizes. We are cautiously optimistic and hope to meet face to face in the spring and pick up with our regular semi-annual conference.

ELECTIONS:

One of the big impacts not meeting in the fall will have is on the terms of the existing board members. This fall marks the end of the terms for all positions. We did consider looking into a means for holding electronic elections, but with the historical record of having so very few actual elections for board positions, as well as having no members known to us with an interest for a position yet, and with our eye on convening again next spring, the board has decided that the simplest solution is to extend terms for another season until we can once again gather face to face. This does not align with our bylaws. We see it as a necessary action in an unprecedented moment in time. It is however extremely important that if anyone is considering getting involved and wants to help move the goals and initiatives of their professional Association forward, please let us know. It is important work, and having new voices is vital to its success. In saying that, I want to take this opportunity to congratulate and thank our newest board member, Mr. Myron Stenka from the City of Regina. Myron has graciously stepped up to fill a vacant position of Member-At-Large and we thank him for his commitment to the Association. I also want to thank all our volunteer board

members and committee members for all their hard work and commitment and for agreeing to extend their terms. I am grateful for your dedication to our profession.

EDUCATION:

The primary role the SBOA serves is to provide professional development opportunities for its members. As mentioned before, we are keeping an eye on allowable group size rules to plan some classroom winter training opportunities. For now, our Education Chair is working diligently to make sure that any available online training, workshops, and information sessions that would be of interest and beneficial to building officials hit our radar and are shared by email to the membership. You are already receiving online training opportunities and webinar events through our email campaigns. Continue to watch for future opportunities as more and more manufacturer's and training providers use this platform to get their messages out.

CERTIFICATION:

The SBOA Certification Committee are still receiving applications and continue to meet electronically to process and award designations. I encourage you to become familiar with the SBOA Certification Program and apply for a designation. All the information is available on our website. Remember that if you are a licensed building official you already qualify for a designation.

We had hoped to have rolled out our new Certification exam platform by now. The work on this project continues every day. And although the SBOA is the primary driver of this National exam program and contributed significantly to the development of the question database, we are not the engine for the development of the online portals and web-based machinery. This is not to say that someone is not doing a good job of building the machine, it is to say that it has a huge undertaking in a technical world which makes it really hard for us to understand what all has to be done. I do know this...everyone involved knows how important it is to us here in Saskatchewan, it has been worked on continually, and we will have it the moment it is ready. We do get updates and at this point, the developers are moving to the testing stage. I have said before that 'we think it's close'. I am not going to say that again, but testing sounds positive to me. We thank everyone for their patience, and I thank all the people across the country who are working on this project.

The world has changed for all of us and continues to change. The SBOA continues to move forward on all our goals and initiatives thanks to the dedication and hard work of many.

How we do our work is not nearly as important as why. Be well!

Chris Gates, A.Sc.T, CRBO, BOL-3
President
Saskatchewan Building Officials Association