

UMAAS UPDATE

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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT &
BOARD of EXAMINERS SECRETARY.
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CHANGE IS CONSTANT

"Every situation in life is temporary. So, when life is good, make sure you enjoy it and receive it fully. And when life is not so good, remember that it will not last forever and better days are on the way." -Bruce Lee

One thing that is certain about urban municipal administration, things never stay the same. Every general election has the potential for massive swings in policy and attitude at the council table. To survive, an administrator must be willing to adapt. As Bruce Lee also said:

"You put water in a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water in a bottle, it becomes the bottle...Be water, my friend."

Most of us won't need to use Bruce Lee's teachings in our day to day lives (though the odd one of us has been assaulted for doing their job)! But even his fighting style, Jeet Kune Do, makes for an interesting comparison to municipal administration. Jeet Kune Do is essentially what we would now call Mixed Martial Arts. Bruce Lee didn't want it to be a rigid "style" like other martial arts. He wanted it to be flexible and incorporate the best elements of all the martial arts to create the most effective fighter possible. As fighting trends and opponents changed, so should your approach. At the time, this was a revolutionary idea.

The most effective administrators do the same thing – taking the best ideas from others and making them work in their own communities. We adapt to changing trends and understand that sometimes what worked in the past will not work now and what has failed in the past could still work in the future, depending on the circumstances. We can't control every external thing that happens but we can try to understand the best way to deal with that situation and win the fight. The key is to remain flexible and open, roll with the punches and look for opportunities.

UMAAS too is going through significant changes with the retirements of Rick Dolezsar (Executive Director), Teresa Parkman (Executive Assistant), and Joyce Aitken (Board of Examiner's Secretary) all at the same time! They've been in their roles for so long that it's hard to picture how we'll get along without their experience and advice! I'm thankful to have gotten to know them personally through UMAAS and wish them all the best going forward! They will be greatly missed!

The Administration Committee, including Barry Elliott (Chair), Aileen Garrett, Meredith Norman and Janelle Desautels, took on the task of finding people to fill these huge shoes! I was very pleased to see a great deal of interest and strong candidates for the positions and want to thank all the applicants (primarily current and former administrators) for their interest! After interviewing several applicants, the committee recommended Jason Chorneyko and Lovely Magnaye for the Executive Director & Assistant roles, working out of the Town of Wynyard, and Brad Hvidston for the Urban Board of Examiner's Secretary position. I'm pleased to announce we have agreements in place and these three will be taking on their new roles shortly!

Our new team brings tremendous experience and/or skills to the table and this will allow us to hit the ground running, continuing the work of our retiring team with minimal training. Jason Chorneyko, our former President, is right up to date with all of the issues at hand. I have complete trust in his ability to provide good advice and represent UMAAS as professionally as his predecessor. Our interview with Lovely Magnaye was my first interaction with her and I'm excited about how she can help us modernize the organization, especially in terms of communications, and provide a legal perspective on issues. Brad Hvidston has been an urban administrator for 22 years and a former UMAAS Director. He holds an Advanced Level II Urban Certificate, a Rural "C" Certificate, and has been a Board Member on the Operator Certification Board for 14 years – he will be a huge asset as Secretary of the Urban Board of Examiners. I have absolute confidence in the ability of our new team to adapt to the challenges of our ever changing, challenging profession! Please join me in congratulating Jason, Lovely and Brad on their new roles! I should also mention that Rodney Audette has graciously agreed to return to the Past President role to provide his informed perspective on issues!

While change is never easy, it's easier with strong leaders and I'd like to thank the Administration Committee, in particular Barry Elliott, for making sure we have the right people in place!

“A Few Last Words “

Well, it has been a long time since July 1st, 1990 when I assumed the position of UMAAS Executive Director, that is if you consider 32.5 years a long time. It sure doesn't seem that long, but the calendar doesn't lie. I certainly remember being a bit overwhelmed a few times in the early days, but things always seemed to work their way out. I guess you can call me old school because I always considered that I had a job to do and it had to be done to the best of my ability, while trying to fit it in with family events and obligations and regular duties with the Town of Hudson Bay where I was the CAO for 37 years until my retirement there in 2019. I will say that I will certainly miss the fellowship and friends that I have made with my UMAAS Executives and associates over the years. I have been fortunate to make a multitude of lasting friendships over the years that I'm sure will carry on into the years ahead.

I would also like to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations and best wishes to our new appointees Jason Chorneyko, Executive Director, Lovely Magnaye, Executive Assistant and Brad Hvidston, Board of Examiners Secretary and wish them all the best in their future UMAAS endeavours. I know there will be the standard comments about having big shoes to fill, but realistically how tough can it be to fill size 10. Congratulations also to Renea Paridaen of Churchbridge newly elected Director for Division 3.

I also want to thank my family for their support and understanding over the years, particularly my wife Karen who was often left to hold things together back home while I was off to UMAAS meetings and conferences over the past three decades. Meetings always seemed to fall on the same weekend as hockey or ringette tournaments, conferences were the same dates as color nights, or track meets and so on. I have to admit having regrets over some of the events I missed, but like I said earlier the term “old school” comes to mind.

It is funny the way things seem to happen; you know like everything you want to take part in happening on the same day. My last official UMAAS meetings will be Nov 25th and 26th, which just happens to be the same day our two granddaughters come to Hudson Bay to play their first initiation hockey game of the year. I know they will wonder where grandpa is, and I will certainly have to be there for rest of the season and maybe try to arrange a little ice time with them to make it up.

So I've been retired from the Town for a couple years here and one of the most common questions I hear is “How are you liking retirement”? Well, it's great, still busy as ever and I have a lot of interests and employment / volunteer opportunities to keep me busy. Truth be known it hasn't been just a cozy ride off into the sunset as most of the jobs that I undertake now are far harder in a physical nature than anything I've done since growing up on the family farm back in the 1970's. Whether it's helping my daughter's in laws on the family farm, running a chainsaw to assist the local snowmobile club, clearing trails or cutting wood for one of the shelters or taking on a new home improvement project I have to admit I like to work and accomplish things. Having a tired body at the end of the day feels a lot better than having a tired head, as would be the case in the past. Bottom line and truth be known our MEPP plan is great and does provide a good deal of financial security in retirement. As it stands now there are no shortage of odd jobs or employment opportunities for able bodied retired people if you're interested. I am going to enjoy more time to do the things that are important at home, especially spending time with our grandchildren, perhaps travelling to some places we haven't been. Also, personally I have had time to work on a few hobbies like restoring a few high-performance snowmobiles, honing my golf game and even a little time to work on my skills as a guitar player LOL.

Trust me I understand that over the years, although I've tried hard at times, I know that I will never make it as a comedian, but as has been my practice over the years I was going to try leave you with a bit of humor to close. Just as luck would have it, I found a totally hilarious joke that left me laughing, but after thinking about it for a minute I decided, I wouldn't be able to use it in this article because by today's standards it wouldn't have been politically correct. I guess in order to become old and wise first you have to be young and foolish.

Thank you everyone and all the best to you all ! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year !

Executive Editorial

- Renea Paridaen
Division 3 Director

As a brand-new Director, I was tasked with creating my Administrator's Profile, Community Profile, and Executive Editorial all in one issue! (Hopefully I didn't disappoint) Since being asked to write an editorial, I started thinking about possible topics, but topics that I feel CAOs would benefit from as well. I did not realize mental health, wellness, and self-care are so important as an Administrator. For myself, mental health was even a bigger concern during the pandemic and with levels seeming to be on the higher side, it's a problem not only for the public, but for CAO's.

I remember there being a program for almost every business or organization, that the higher levels of government were offering to provide assistance in regards to a wage subsidy for front line, essential workers; however, in all the streams that were rolled out, it seems CAOs/municipal employees were almost forgotten about. Sure, we received Canada Restart Funds for COVID-19 but I'm talking about the incentive front line workers received or those with an essential title. For all pandemic grants, municipalities were excluded for the \$1-\$3 raise per hour employers were giving their employees., which employers received this grant money from the higher levels of Governments. CAO's worked tirelessly throughout the whole pandemic, dealt with residents who were ruder than usual or expected things to be done now or even yelled at you due to the masking restrictions that were in place—which was out of your control. The tiniest of an inconvenience would set someone off. For myself, it was business as usual, being open as an essential place, coming to work, but dealing with all of these negative interactions. All of these negative interactions are not good for one's health---hence mental health, wellness, and self-care seems fitting.

During the pandemic, I was one of the individuals that reached out for supports regarding mental health and wellness. This is one topic for managing and coping that was not covered in my Local Government Authority training and I hope that it will be covered in future courses or once the new course is rolled out at SaskPolytech. During my teachings, I thought I would pass along some helpful links and information for other CAOS in a similar struggle. If you type in "[saskatchewan.ca](https://www.saskatchewan.ca)" in the web browser at the top, then scroll down to "COVID-19—which is under Health." Then, click on "Mental Health and COVID-19". This website page is one that was recommended by a professional therapist.

This page includes information on: healthy habits; managing stress and anxiety and knowing when to ask for help; alcohol, cannabis, other drug use- safe ways to manage stress and anxiety. If you scroll further down it also includes **Healthline 811, Wellness Together Canada** (connects people with social workers, psychologists, peer support workers and it's all confidential), virtual counselling, mobile crisis centres, kids help phone, farm stress line, breaking free online (substance use recovery and support is available), national overdose response service, hope for wellness (talk with experienced counsellors), national suicide prevention line, online cognitive behaviour therapy, be SaskWell (mental health/wellness service created by University of Saskatchewan researchers) and many more.

Near the bottom of the page there is information for walk-in counselling as well that can be selected by location. Even if none of this information is relevant to you, I ask that you please pass it along and share it if you have a website or social media for your residents.

I visited my sister in Regina a week ago and she stated at the end of CPR-C First Aid training through St. John's Ambulance, they now offer Narcan training for suspected opioid overdoses. Having this information available to your residents may save a life. I know in Churchbridge we have had multiple drug overdoses and suicides in the past 5-10 years. I believe sharing this knowledge will prevent deaths.

Mental Health and wellness are so important in your daily life. As a CAO, if you enjoy your job, the residents and the community, you are more willing to stick around and stay. Having your mental health in order helps you also provide better service to your residents and ensures you are maximizing your potential. The wellness is important to stay healthy, go to the gym, and de-stress after a long day of work—however that looks to you (mine is hot tubbing). Self-care is so important because how are you supposed to be a leader, if you are not in a good head space or "feeling the part". My recommendation to CAOs is to ensure your battery never runs out, or if you're close, it is time for a holiday! (I went to Ireland in September for two weeks) We have a tough but rewarding job; however, to last, you need to maintain and maybe even strengthen your mental health, wellness, and self-care. Here is a quote that I thought was fitting, "**No matter what is happening in your life, always prioritize self-care.**"

Take Care.

CAO Profile

Renea Paridaen, CAO Town of Churchbridge

Wow, where to begin! I grew up on a farm, 6km out of Churchbridge and 3km out of Langenburg. I completed my schooling up until Grade 12 in the Town of Langenburg. I graduated in 2012. In 2012, I moved to the University of Regina to pursue a Bachelor of Education, with a specialty in high school Mathematics and a minor in Physics. This took me all of one semester to realize this was not my calling. I remember completing Vector Calculus homework and it took me 2.5 pages to solve a problem, and I am like nope. I decided to drop out of university for a year as I was sort of lost. I worked for a year in Regina and went back to the University of Regina but this time to enroll in the Faculty of Business Program, with a designation in accounting. I completed about 2 years of my business degree, then came across the Advanced Local Government Authority Certificate, to try and complete something worthwhile with the many electives you are required to complete.

I then realized that Accounting was not my calling either, so decided to switch to Human Resource Management at the last minute. As I was taking the LGA courses, I began to fall in love with government and politics. The more courses I took, the more I was intrigued. At this point in time, I still never thought I would use this certificate and HR was my main job I would pursue after my schooling. Fast forward, I did graduate with a HR Degree and my Advanced Local Government Authority Certificate from the University of Regina! A few months later, my dad sends me a link to a job, that actually was opening up back home with the Town of Churchbridge. I saw the ad but was hesitant as I was in the city for over 5 years now and I wasn't sure about moving back home. I thought about the job for a full week and remembered how it felt when I was back home visiting. I decided to apply—because why not and if they want to seriously consider me, then I would have to decide whether I want to move or not. Fast forward, I got an offer and decided to leave the city!

There is something about home and going back to the place you're from. Towns are more friendly, quiet, and not as busy as bigger places. A few weeks ago, I pulled out my Grade 12 graduation book and under Class Historians, it reads as follows: "When Renea heard about dooms day, the first thing she did was get in Mom's Taxi (my car at the time—its license plate) and head to Churchbridge for cover." I thought this was very fitting as I spent most of my high school years doing all my business in Churchbridge—from going to Church, working multiple jobs, and attending a local youth group with past friends.

In July 2018, I moved to the Town of Churchbridge to fulfill a job as an Administrative Assistant. In September 2019, I became the Acting Administrator and in October 2019, became the CAO for the Town. More of my bio can be found on the UMAAS website under Division 3 Director. My immediate future plans are to complete my Municipal Leadership Development Program (MLDP) certification and begin my Private Pilot's License in the near future! When I'm not in the office, I enjoy taking a trip out to my parent's farm and playing with their cats and dog. I also enjoy going for combine rides, hot tubbing, snowboarding, laying in my hammock, trampolining, and playing with my Chinchilla!

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Community Profile

Town of Churchbridge

The Town of Churchbridge is a welcoming and inclusive community, located at the junction of Highway #16 and #80 near the Mosaic Potash mines. The Town is located approximately 50km southeast of Yorkton. The town was established in 1964 and most of the infrastructure was developed to accommodate residents who were working at the Potash Mines. In 2011-2016, the town experienced a 20% increase in population, which led to more infrastructure investments. The current population of Churchbridge is 866. The area still remains a heavy potash mining zone, with K3 built and the Provincial Government ramping up production/outputs.

The Town of Churchbridge offers an array of services including a Credit Union, grocery, pharmacy, Post Office, two gas stations/convenience store, three restaurants (soon to be four), clothing store, a bar, liquor and confectionary store, two autobody shops, legal and insurance services, multiple churches/religions, esthetics, multiple hair salons, multiple construction businesses, fitness centre, Preschool, K-12 schooling, daycare, dance lessons, library, arena, community hall, swimming pool, sport court, walking path, horseshoe pits, dog park, and campground to name a few!

The Town is very proud of their coin monument. Rita Swanson, is a resident from the Churchbridge area. Rita's drawing was picked to commemorate Canada's 125 birthday! The Loonie is 6 feet in diameter and can be viewed adjacent to Bridger Ave in Churchbridge.

Another big addition to our community is Reverses Osmosis (RO) water. In 2018, the Town received a grant from both levels of Government. I am proud to announce that we have had RO water for just over a year now within the community.

Recreational opportunities are plentiful for families to enjoy in Churchbridge as well. In 2014, the Town built a brand new outdoor Aquatic Centre, which offers a beach entry to the pool, toddler pool, lane pool, diving board, waterslide, and a rock climbing wall was added this past year. There is a disc golf course that is located in the Churchbridge Campground that consists of a 12- basket course. Disc rentals are available from the Town Office. However, the most popular recreational opportunity is our Sport Court for kids/youth. This court includes a volleyball court, basketball court, a skating rink in the winter, and a place to skateboard. No matter the time of day, you can drive by this attraction on Prothero Ave West, located right across from Royal Estates, and see kids playing.

The Town of Churchbridge was mostly an older demographic but is starting to slowly be inhabited by the younger generation. Not many houses are for sale and if one is advertised, it doesn't take long before its sold. Churchbridge is the place to be as its quiet, low crime rate (rural crime watch group), multiple childcare options, and lots of recreational opportunities Come visit us and see our welcoming and inclusive town.



Coin Monument in Churchbridge, SK

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October 19, 2022

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Mr. Touet is under annual retainer to
your Association and is available to
members for initial consultations.

Everyone was seated around the table as
the food was being served.

When little Johnny received his plate, he
started eating right away.

"Johnny, wait until we've said our prayer,"
his mother reminded him.

"I don't have to," the little boy replied.

"Of course you do," his mother insisted,
"we say a prayer before eating at our house."

"That's at our house," Johnny
explained, "but this is Grandma's house
and she knows how to cook."

HaHaHa

**MERRY CHRISTMAS
&
HAPPY NEW YEAR**



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