

CANADIAN

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FINANCE MATTERS

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Committee on Canadian Issues (CCI) Highlights

Kelowna, British Columbia | January 15-16, 2016

Co-chair Suzanne Fillion welcomed the committee to the City of Kelowna for the thirty-fifth meeting since the committee's inception in San Francisco in 1998 (the eighteenth held in Canada). The committee met for two days. This included a complete day of informative and interesting presentations on local finance from the City of Kelowna and the City of Vernon, which was coordinated by committee member Jackie Dueck, the Systems and Reporting Manager for the City of Kelowna, and committee member Kevin Bertles, the Director of Financial Services for the City of Vernon. The presentations covered the City of Kelowna's business and entrepreneurial development, the City of Vernon's updating of its chart of accounts, and the City of Kelowna's evolution of managing technology through its Information Services Department.

New GFOA Executive Board Member from Canada



Congratulations to Catherine Brubacher who was appointed to the GFOA's Executive Board. Catherine Brubacher joins Suzanne Fillion as the two GFOA Board members from Canada. Catherine is the City Treasurer with the City of Brantford and a long-standing member of the

CCI.

Updates to the Committee

Suzanne Fillion provided an update on the recent activities relating to the GFOA Executive Board and

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EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

noted the following:

- Consulting services offered by the GFOA continue to grow, with the most popular services being the “Business Process Improvement” services in conjunction with “Enterprise Resource Planning”.
- There were 65 submissions for the Canadian Award for Financial Reporting Program for the fiscal year ended 2015 (increase from 62 in previous years) and the Popular Annual Financial Reporting Program continues to grow.
- A member survey was undertaken in 2015 which provide GFOA with additional insight into the demographics and challenges of the members, along with the products that are useful to the members.

Canada Day Professional Development Task Force

A major focus for the committee at the meeting was developing and coordinating the Canada Day at the GFOA annual conference, which will be on Sunday, May 22. Canada Day is a full day of sessions dedicated to topics that are of interest to GFOA's Canadian finance officers. Tina Tapley and Greg Kliparchuk, the co-chairs of the Professional Development Task Force, worked with the committee in finalizing a schedule to cover a wide range of topics. Canada Day will be led by keynote speaker Avery Shenfeld, the Chief Economist and Managing Director, CIBC Capital Markets, who will provide an economic update. The Canada Day sessions also include insight on revenue sources that are most appropriate to pay for infrastructure, the current federal-municipal relationship with infrastructure, infrastructure case studies from Toronto and Saskatoon, municipal lean program, fiscal impacts and management of growing municipalities, good governance in the public sector, community revitalization, and entrepreneurial development.

Standards Task Force Best Practices

The Standards Task Force assists the committee in

[2016 GFOA Annual Conference](#)

[Canada Day](#)

[GFOA of Western Canada 2016 Conference](#)

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COMMITTEE ON CANADIAN ISSUES (CCI)

Members

Suzanne Fillion, Co-Chair, City of Surrey, BC

Catherine Brubacher, Co-Chair, City of Brantford, ON

Kevin Bertles, City of Vernon, BC

Jeffrey Dalley, City of Yellowknife, ON

Jackie Dueck, City of Kelowna, BC

Bruce Fisher, Halifax Regional Municipality, NS

Clae Hack, City of Saskatoon, SK

Donna Herridge, ON

Patrice Impey, City of Vancouver, BC

Glen Jarbeau, City of Spruce Grove, AB

Greg Kliparchuk, Province of Alberta, AB

Josie La Vita, City of Toronto, ON

John Martin, City of Moncton, NB

Rick Masters, City of Calgary, AB

Paul Olafson, City of Winnipeg, MB

Tina Tapley, The City of Fredericton, NB

Yves Prosper Tedom, Town of Hampstead, QC

Valentina Todoran, Montreal-West, QC

Fuwing Wong, Town of Caledon, ON

Committee Advisor

Mark Gilbert, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS

GFOA Staff Members

identifying GFOA best practices and advisories that are applicable in Canada. Patrice Impey, the co-chair of the Standards Task Force, reviewed with the committee potential best practices that may be applicable in Canada or are best practices that are specific to Canada. The committee will continue its review of these best practices at the next winter meeting in Canada. The best practices and advisories that have been approved by the committee as applicable in Canada can be viewed on the [Canadian Finance page](#) on the GFOA website.

Stephen Gauthier, Jim Phillips

Advocacy & Communications Task Force Canadian Newsletter

The Advocacy & Communications Task Force, led by its co-chair Jackie Dueck, develops the GFOA's Canadian Newsletter, *Canadian Finance Matters*. Fuwing Wong is lead coordinator for the newsletter. The committee decided that this issue of the spring newsletter will include articles that focus on the theme "High Speed Internet Investment".

Roundtable discussion on major issues

The committee members also discussed some of the major issues that they were encountering which included some of the following items:

- Infrastructure funding and what conversations the committee members had with Ottawa,
- Light Tapid Transit,
- The city's acquisition of 25% of the county,
- Budget process impact from outside factors,
- Working with Translink on a light regional transit (developing stronger data analysis),
- Focus on clean water process,
- New management,
- Non-tax revenues that have been stagnant,
- Good success on budgeting on outcomes.

Other items

Kelly Gibson and Sam Weller provided an update on the GFOA of Western Canada's future goals.

Date of the next meeting

The next CCI meeting will be on Saturday, May 21st, 2016, at the GFOA Annual Conference in Toronto.

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Highlighted Best Practice

A section of the GFOA website is dedicated to the [GFOA's best practices that are applicable in Canada](#). One of the best practices that the Committee on Canadian Issues would like to highlight is [Business Preparedness and Continuity Guidelines](#). This best practice recommends that governments develop, test, and maintain a plan to continue their basic business operations during and immediately after disruptive events. Governments must be able to anticipate problems, detect threats and determine effective protective actions to enable them to continue to function.

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Municipal Broadband: An introduction to the articles in this edition

Fuwing Wong, CPA, CGA; General Manager of Finance and Infrastructure / Chief Financial Officer, Town of Caledon;
fuwing.wong@caledon.ca

The focus of this edition of the CCI newsletter is on municipal broadband. Many municipalities across the Canada have implemented plans to improve high speed internet services to their residents and businesses.

For private sector businesses considering a re-location/expansion, access to high speed/ultra-high speed internet services is becoming a “must have”. While it is not the only factor businesses consider, access to high speed internet services to share, send and receive project information, medical images, data for agricultural internet of things devices, post-production media work, or schematics for 3-D manufacturing is becoming more important for their initial relocation/expansion screening decisions. In addition to economic development, access to affordable high speed internet services for residents is equally as important:

- For rural residents, access to high speed internet services (beyond satellite) has been a challenge for many years as private sector internet service providers claim poor ROI calculation to warrant the infrastructure investment into these areas.
- In areas where high speed internet services are primarily provided by wireless telecommunications providers, users experience better-than-satellite speeds, but the service is expensive and users have low data caps and experience noticeable performance hits once more than one user in a household is accessing the internet.
- Many schoolboards now require high-school students to submit their homework electronically. Without access to affordable internet services from their homes, students resort to driving to library parking lots and fast food establishments in the evenings to upload their homework via wifi internet.

Whether it is for economic development purposes, to provide basic internet access to all residents, or both, this newsletter contains articles about various municipal high speed internet implementations from across the country:

The Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) – A public-private partnership to bring a high-speed internet backbone and services to residents and businesses within thirteen upper tier and county municipalities in Eastern Ontario.

Fredericton, N.B. – A municipally-owned not-for-profit telecommunications company, e-Novations. e-Novations now has about 300 km of fibre optic cable and, in 2013, an independent study confirmed that e-Novations was offering the best value commercial Internet in Canada.

Kelowna, B.C. – The City installed conduit and ran fibre for its own use and to lease out. In addition to operating savings, the City generates revenue from the fibre and is attracting business investment.

Stratford, ON – Starting off as a fibre owner, the City has expanded to become an internet service provider and provides ubiquitous free wifi internet in its downtown core for residents and visitors.

If you have something to say about what you have read or want to suggest a topic for a future CCI

newsletter, please send an email to me, fuwing.wong@caledon.ca.

Thank you.

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Broadband Services and the Eastern Ontario Regional Network

Laura Bradley, Principle, Actionable Intelligence Inc.; laura.bradley@actionable-intelligence.com

As an engineer who has worked on numerous projects helping Municipalities receive better broadband services, I have experienced many options and implementation scenarios. One of the most unique projects I collaborated on was the Eastern Ontario Regional Network.

The Eastern Ontario Regional Network is an initiative undertaken by the Eastern Ontario Warden's Caucus (EOWC) starting in 2009. The Caucus represents thirteen Upper Tier and County governments in Eastern Ontario. The EORN covers approximately 50,000 square kilometers and almost 1 Million people. The territory consists of multiple water bodies, hills and valleys, forests, Canadian shield and agricultural land. There are three larger urban centers and dozens of towns and villages as well as a large rural population.

The main reason for lack of sufficient broadband was market failure – the providers could not make adequate revenue/profit for the required level of investment. The reality is that providing capital infrastructure in rural areas is extremely costly and the number of potential customers is low. Combine this element with the fact that there is pressure on Providers' capital budgets to be spread over large areas that they service. Developing a project to assist Providers with their capital needs in a public private partnership was deemed the answer.

It was determined that a Gigabit Ethernet backbone network would become the spine of the network, aggregating the traffic from across the Region. The access network would then offer 10 Mbps download speeds to end-users. At the time, this represented a more than 8- to 10-fold speed increase for many residents. Previous gap analysis had indicated that more than 1/3 of the residents only had access to satellite services, which were sorely inadequate. With the dawn of the 21st Century and the advance of more advanced software services, it was understood that higher speeds would be required as table stakes for businesses, education, and government services, as well as entertainment.

After completing an open procurement via Requests for Proposals, multiple suppliers were selected to help build the network. Each of the carriers was contracted to provide services for a specific area or component of the network. In total, five different providers were contracted to deliver services.

The 13 Municipalities contributed a total of \$10 Million to the project. Funding was also received from Federal and Ontario governments under the Building Canada Infrastructure program, \$55 Million each. These government funds were leveraged to access more than \$55 Million in private sector funding that was also used to deliver this expansive network. Each of the ISPs operates its network, delivering the services at standardized pricing.

EORN was able to exceed its initial targets of delivering 10 Mbps download speeds to more than 95% of the households in the Region and a minimum of 1.5 Mbps to 99% of the households. The construction commenced in 2010 with all the networks reaching completion by 2014. Now there is a 10 Gigabit

Ethernet backbone reaching 160 locations in towns and villages as well as cities. This backbone provides the “four lane” highway required to ensure that there is ability to scale services over time. Not only does the backbone scale in the amount of traffic it can support, but it can support growth in the access networks both in terms of number of customers and services to customers.

In addition to servicing residents, EORN was able to leverage its funding to provide fibre services to over 50 business parks. These areas are now able to access fibre services, providing existing and new businesses the access to services comparable to urban areas. For some of these business parks, the economic development opportunity to develop these lands was significant and the demand for fibre services was considered a condition that needed to be fulfilled.

EORN continues to work on initiatives around the network despite construction being complete. More information can be obtained at www.eorn.ca.

I believe that broadband is an essential component for 21st Century jobs and work in our society. All employment is becoming more reliant upon devices, and users have high expectations of consistency in connectivity. Combining these elements with new advancements such as the Internet of Things and the need for reliable extensive networks across the land is critical for future success.

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Municipal Fiber Network and Broadband Internet. “Would you like some WiFi with that?”

Maurice Gallant, Chief Information Officer and Director–Information, Improvement and Innovation, City of Fredericton; President, e-Novations ComNet Inc.; maurice.gallant@fredericton.ca

Fredericton is the capital of New Brunswick. The area has a population of just over 80,000 and boasts a base of nearly 4,000 businesses and is home to municipal government, the seat of provincial government and numerous federal government offices as well as two major universities. The City's population is younger than the provincial and national averages; and the presence of the two universities ensures a young, skilled workforce, especially in information technology, engineering, and research and development.

The City of Fredericton places great emphasis on its economic development initiatives to retain and attract business development that contributes positively to the local economy through employment and the development and sale of goods and services to local, national and international markets.

In order to retain, attract and nurture economic development, Fredericton understood that it must contribute to making affordable, effective tools and technology available to the business, government, education and research, and NGO community. A critical component of our economic development strategy is to help our local organizations differentiate themselves by being more competitive and more attractive in the global marketplace.

Leading edge connectivity options and high-speed broadband connectivity is a differentiator, especially if your community has limited access or limiting price points that exceed what is available in larger communities with multiple carriers to choose from. This is the situation that Fredericton found itself in fifteen years ago and were the conditions that led to the creation of e-Novations ComNet Inc., a City of Fredericton municipally-owned telecommunications company.

e-Novations received strong support from City Council, City staff, the university, and local business who all invested in the network by agreeing to purchase services. These anchor tenants, together with innovative service offerings such as the building and provision of customer managed fiber (dark fiber), allowed for e-Novations to grow organically in directions that the community dictated.

It all started with a \$65,000 loan to e-Novations by the City of Fredericton to build a 3 km link to connect two City facilities together. The loan, originally on a three-year term, was repaid the first year. In a co-op model supported by local business and university partners, e-Novations then built a 22km fiber-optic community network interconnecting all partners with each other and to the Internet.

Over time, this was leveraged into a network consisting of 300 km of fiber optic lines throughout the community and a customer base of over 200 customers. Since its inception and to present day, e-Novations, a not-for-profit organization, continues to operate in the black and has never used tax payer dollars to operate. Instead, it is fully funded by its paying members. All positive revenues earned are reinvested in the network to continue to offer best value services to our members.

As network membership grew, Internet demands were aggregated allowing for bulk purchases of commercial Internet, resulting in lower costs for everyone. By 2013, an independent study confirmed that e-Novations was offering the best value commercial Internet in Canada. The e-Novations project has led to other technical initiatives such as a City-wide free wireless Internet service known as Fred-eZone and other "living lab" projects all designed to assist and promote the new digital economy entrepreneur.

In 2000, as part of a community strategic planning exercise appropriately called "Vision 2000", we were encouraged to take stock of our assets. We realized that network connectivity and Internet broadband service was limited and that costs were considerably higher than in larger Canadian centers. Market forces and competition were not sufficient to encourage the two incumbent providers to offer competitive products, services and price-points to a City our size. At that time, many connectivity options becoming increasingly popular in larger North American cities were simply not available in Fredericton. The options that did exist were significantly more expensive than the same products and services in larger jurisdictions.

In order to make Fredericton a place where knowledge-based businesses could exist, succeed and indeed thrive in a developing digital economy, the City of Fredericton felt it needed to do what it could to level the playing field.

Using this fiber ring as a backbone, e-Novations then proceeded to extend the reach of the broadband network to the rest of the community through the use of long-distance wireless technology. In addition to enabling operational efficiencies across the municipal organization, it provided an opportunity to deliver 21st century 'Intelligent Infrastructure' to the community at prices that rivaled larger Canadian and American centers. This became an important pillar of Fredericton's economic development.

By delivering high-speed and low-cost connectivity, the new network brought many benefits to the municipal government and to local businesses and institutions. The City, for example, was able to increase municipal productivity by interconnecting various information technology assets in 20 or so municipal facilities to create a Municipal Area Network (MAN).

In 2003, City Council challenged staff to come up with ideas to create a climate of innovation and productivity and to generate some excitement about Fredericton.

We proposed the idea of implementing a free of charge Wi-Fi network throughout the City's public spaces. This would enable everyone in Fredericton to stay connected to the Internet and to their offices at any time, from anywhere in the City. Council felt it was important to provide this Intelligent Infrastructure to City staff, citizens and the business community in just the same way they deliver streets, sidewalks, parks, public facilities, and other forms of municipal infrastructure.

e-Novations built a state-of-the-art WiFi network by leveraging the existing fiber optic network together with using strategic City-owned and partner sites as wireless backhaul towers. On November 18, 2003, Fredericton's city-wide 'hotspot' – called Fred-eZone – was born and was the first such free service in Canada.

Fred-eZone serves as a 'living laboratory' in which local firms and the University of New Brunswick can develop and deliver leading-edge applications, such as Hotspot Parking and Webcam traffic monitoring, resulting in new markets and new expertise.

The most significant result of the Fred-eZone initiative is that the business community now has a sense of confidence that the municipal government is doing what it can to foster their success by ensuring they have the types of tools they need to compete globally.

From its inception to present day, the e-Novations fiber network has grown to nearly 300 km of fiber optics within the City of Fredericton, and the membership base has reached over 200 customers. As it grew, the purchasing power of the network as it relates to commercial broadband Internet became stronger, and e-Novations was well positioned to become an Internet Service Provider (ISP).

e-Novations was in the unique position to aggregate Internet demand on its network and go to the wholesale market representing many large and small users alike. It was by these means that e-Novations was able to offer its members the best value commercial Internet in Canada.

The commercial grade Internet offered on the e-Novations network is multi-homed through two diverse wholesale providers, making it the most highly available and mission critical infrastructure in the region. It is now well understood that the nature of today's digital economy requires highly available, unlimited use and affordable Internet bandwidth. e-Novations has worked with its members to develop a service that meets and exceeds their expectations.

In 2013, e-Novations commissioned a study by the University of New Brunswick to evaluate the value proposition of e-Novations Internet offerings compared to similar offerings across Canada. It was determined that e-Novations commercial Internet offering was the best valued commercial Internet in Canada.

In the spring of 2014, Fredericton announced that it had achieved the status of a "Gigabit City". With a radical price and Internet package advantage, Fredericton has garnered strong interest from Atlantic Canada's knowledge-sector entrepreneurs.

Since its inception, e-Novations has always been about economic development. Our efforts continue to build on the reputation of Fredericton as a "Smart City" and to add meaningful value to business, government, research and education.

Recently e-Novations has formed a unique partnership with F6 Networks to further develop, maintain and co-operate the network. This partnership further strengthens Fredericton's value proposition and adds even more connectivity options for organizations choosing to stay in or move to Fredericton to

compete in the global marketplace.

The model that e-Novations has developed can be, and is being, replicated as elected officials and senior management in other communities see the vision and participate in the success.

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Kelowna's Dark Fibre Network – Saving Money, Increasing Productivity and Creating Economic Development Opportunities

Robert Fine, Director of Business and Entrepreneurial Development, City of Kelowna; rfine@kelowna.ca

With a 2015 population of 117,312, Kelowna is the largest community in the Okanagan Valley, located 400km east of Vancouver and 130km north of the United States border in the Southern Interior of British Columbia. Kelowna is the fastest growing city in Canada (3.2%), with high technology, niche manufacturing, wine, health care, tourism and post-secondary education sectors in particular attracting new business and residents to the area.

Kelowna is home to a growing high technology sector (estimated annual revenue of \$650 million), 10th busiest airport in Canada, UBC Okanagan and medical school. The City of Kelowna has taken an active role in creating the best environment for business to thrive, having won the BC Small Business Roundtable Award for Best City for Business in British Columbia two years running, and working to build on the flourishing technology sector, branding Kelowna as an innovation hub.

Why Dark Fibre?

With saving money, service delivery improvement, and economic development in mind, the City began to seriously look at establishing its own Dark Fibre network. For the past decade, the City of Kelowna has relied heavily on leased lines from a large telecom company to provide connectivity from city buildings to a datacentre at City Hall. While these lines have proven to be very reliable, they have been restricted to relatively low bandwidth. In fact, despite a massive increase in the amount of data being transferred between facilities, the amount of bandwidth available had remained the same for over ten years. It was anticipated that most, if not all, sites would require additional bandwidth in the next few years with escalating costs. In fact, the City had seen increases of just under 200% for its existing bandwidth.

In an effort to reduce the impact of this cost increase, and to provide much needed additional bandwidth, the City of Kelowna installed approximately 13 kilometres of fibre optic cable over the past few years to service strategic city buildings. In order to accommodate future needs and take advantage of volume discounts, excess fibre capacity was installed. This excess “dark” fibre is available to lease out to potential partners and customers moving data between locations, while at the same time serving as a potential revenue source for the City.

The City does not provide personal phone, television or Internet service on this fibre, but can provide a dedicated high-speed connection from one point to another for local businesses and institutions. The City offers the service at a flat fee of \$1,000 per month per pair of fibre strands, with an \$800 administration fee to connect to the network.

There are no organizations in Kelowna that lease or sell affordable dark fibre. It is a very sought-after

commodity, but is not generally made available by the existing telecommunications companies, as their business model involves providing services (i.e., phone, tv, internet) and tying their pricing schedule to the type and quantity of the service they provide. This is a much more lucrative model than the dark fibre model, but comes with increased costs and challenges to provide. By providing dark fibre only, the City has found a marketing niche for itself that no one else is willing or able to provide.

The City of Kelowna currently spends approximately \$115,000 per year on telecommunications to connect remote sites to the City Hall data centre. Once these sites are connected to the city fibre network, these costs will drop to near zero. This amounts to \$1,000,000 in savings in just under 9 years. These savings can be applied against the cost of the fibre network build. Additionally, it is projected that costs for the existing service will rise dramatically over the next few years as sites require increased bandwidth.

Cost to install existing fibre optic network (approximately 13 kilometres) was approximately \$300,000. The City was able to keep the costs very low on these builds due to the fact that an extensive conduit network was already in place. By taking advantage of existing conduits wherever possible, the majority of the costs incurred were for the installation of the fibre optic cable itself. Subsequent builds will continue to take advantage of existing conduit wherever possible, but it is recognized that a significant amount of new conduit will need to be installed. Phase II of the project will get underway in late 2016, an approved \$2.4 million expansion to the north taking in the City's landfill, the University of British Columbia's Okanagan Campus and the Kelowna International Airport. Subsequent proposed phases would build the network out to 33 km.

The expansion will be financed by charging the city facilities on the network a monthly fee and by leasing excess dark fibre to interested private and public organization. The City will finance the expansion by selling shares in Fortis, the results of transferring its electrical utility assets in 2012 and using the proceeds from the transfer to buy shares in FortisBC's parent company, Fortis Inc. Revenue generated from the city departments and private and public organizations leasing fibre will then be used to re-purchase shares.

The decision to build a network is already demonstrating economic development impacts. Bardel, a Vancouver-based animation company, came to Kelowna with 5 employees in 2011, and as it has grown decided to locate a permanent animation studio that now employs 60 as a result of having access to the City's Dark Fibre network. Rackforce, a provider of cloud based storage and service, was the first private sector client, allowing the firm to continue to serve in a cost effective way many large businesses from Western Canada and the United States. Dark Fibre is now part of the "Kelowna technology story" a marketing tool that has helped distinguish the City from many other communities seeking to grow and retain high paying clean technology jobs. And we are just getting started.

The decision to proceed was a critical step in continuing to build the City's brand as we strive to be the best mid-sized City in North America. And we have learned a number of lessons along the way. Create a business case and be highly critical and conservative with revenue projections. Assess the needs of the community and see what role a private provider can offer and see if there is both a demand and cost argument that could be made. Look at where your municipality wants to be from an economic development perspective and see what role fibre in any form can provide. To date, over 135 cities in North America have fibre networks – some dark, some providing direct to home internet. Make sure your solution matches your community's needs; and don't let the large telecom providers drive you into

making a quick decision. Kelowna's list of Dark Fibre customers is growing – taking a valuable city cost-saving asset and sharing the opportunity.

For more information about Kelowna's Dark Fibre network, visit kelowna.ca/darkfibre.

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Installing Fibre and Wi-Fi Assets in Stratford, Ontario

Kelly McCann, CFO, Rhyzome Networks; kmccann@rhyzome.ca

At first glance, one might wonder why a City would invest in broadband infrastructure. Historically, cities haven't seen broadband as an essential service or an area of expertise. So why would Stratford, Ontario, a tiny city of around 32,000 people, invest in installing fibre and Wi-Fi assets throughout its community? Because the leaders of this small but progressive city believe that broadband is as essential to the municipality as roads, water systems and electricity. These leaders believed that broadband would be the infrastructure of the future and by investing into that future today, the City of Stratford would have a strategic advantage in the development of that infrastructure.

In 2000, deregulation of public utility commissions forced the spin-off of fibre assets originally held by utilities, into a new entity. Where some utilities opted to sell off their fibre, the City of Stratford chose to maintain its asset within a subsidiary, now called Rhyzome Networks.

Rhyzome built out dark fibre over the years following deregulation and in 2010 made a significant investment to cover the City with Wi-Fi. This investment required the company to expand its fibre network in addition to installing wireless equipment. Rhyzome added over 50 km of fibre optic cable and installed over 300 wireless antennas across the City that year. This allowed the City to proactively move forward on its strategic path to provide connectivity for everyone, not just a privileged few.

With the infrastructure in place, tech companies began noticing Stratford as a potential location to test their products. Cisco, Toshiba and other companies have come to Stratford to test their latest products and to observe how they work into the connected community.

The business model utilized not only allows Stratford to leverage its network as a way to attract new business to the City for economic development, but to also allow residents to sign up for internet services with an ISP that is City owned, essentially using their monthly internet costs to invest back into the City in which they live.

The business model and the economic viability of the company established in 2000 allowed this network expansion to occur without any provincial/federal or private sector investment. The project was fully self-funded and funded through commercial debt repaid by Rhyzome Networks over a five-year period.

The business model surrounding these investments in infrastructure includes a segment of dark and lit fibre sales to business customers and wireless sales to residential customers. The pricing models vary according to the services being requested by the customers, but are such that Rhyzome Networks is able to maintain its assets and continue to grow its profits each year.

A qualitative advantage of this city-wide network of fibre and Wi-Fi is the social benefit it brings. Currently there is free wireless connectivity in the downtown core of Stratford, enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Another factor considered in the success of this initiative is the ability of Stratford to offer

connectivity inclusiveness for all residents and businesses. As an example, the residential wireless product sells for as little as \$30/month, a price point that appeals to many.

From an economic development standpoint, the infrastructure investment has been beneficial both from the perspective of businesses considering Stratford as a location to lay down some roots, and as an inviting bonus for the tourists visiting the City each year who can hop on the network in the downtown core for free, or in various other areas for a small fee. One of the greatest benefits however, has been the interest of large corporations looking to test new technology in Stratford and viewing this City as the perfect test ground for innovation.

It has been an exciting decade for the City of Stratford and their progressive movement towards connectivity for all citizens and businesses. Many lessons have been learned along the way, including the need for an absolutely viable business plan to support the investment prior to taking the leap. The world of connectivity and internet service providers is fast paced and filled with pitfalls. It's important for municipalities to truly understand this environment before deciding to invest.

Considering the current and future needs of an entire City population is no easy task, but Stratford has managed to find that sweet spot and stay flexible within this quickly changing industry so that it can continue to proudly declare it is a City of the future.

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Canadian Award for Financial Reporting Program

What is the Canadian Award for Financial Reporting Program? The Government Finance Officers Association's Canadian Award for Financial Reporting Program (CANFR Program) has been promoting the preparation of high quality financial reports since 1986. More than 60 governments participate in the program each year. All participants are Canadian municipal governments that follow the standards promulgated by the Public Sector Accounting Board.

What are the benefits of the program? Users of the financial statements will have access to a high quality report promoting better transparency to citizens and other stakeholders. Credit rating agencies and other interested parties may view the award as a positive factor in decision-making. Also, as accounting and financial reporting standards evolve, participation helps to ensure that your financial report fully implements those standards.

It's easy to participate! Once the annual financial report is prepared, submit it along with a completed application. The normal submission deadline is six months following the government's fiscal year end. Requests for a one-month extension beyond the deadline may be made as a result of various factors (e.g., employee turnover, implementation of major pronouncements, audit issues, etc.) by emailing canfr@gfoa.org.

How does the program work? Governments that participate in the CANFR program will have a grade assigned to each section of their report and receive a list of specific comments and suggestions for improvement. Reviews are conducted by experts and experienced reviewers who are professionals in the field of accounting, auditing, and financial reporting and GFOA professional staff. All reviews are combined and a final vote is determined. If a government's report wins the award, it will receive public recognition of its achievement, along with a plaque and a press release. Public recognition includes

having the name of the government appear on a list of award-winning reports maintained on the GFOA's website.

Which governments qualify to participate in the program? Any type of Canadian local government (general purpose and special purpose) may participate in the CAnFR Program. The report must have an unqualified audit opinion (a "clean opinion") from an independent auditor. Ordinarily, the annual financial report should be published within six months after the government's fiscal year end.

Volunteer to Serve as a Reviewer

If you are an accountant, auditor, or academic with experience in governmental accounting and financial reporting, you are invited to become a volunteer reviewer for the CAnFR Program.

What are the benefits of serving as a volunteer reviewer?

Volunteer reviewers can:

- Be at the forefront of the most recent changes in accounting and financial reporting for local governments,
- Get exposure to a variety of reports from around the country,
- Access a practical way of providing training and development for junior staff without an incremental cost,
- Gain insight into how to improve their own annual financial reports, and
- Achieve professional recognition.

How much time does it take to serve as a reviewer? Reviewers enjoy considerable flexibility regarding the number and type of reports they wish to review. The GFOA has developed a checklist to streamline reviews and save valuable time. The reviewer's checklist is available at the GFOA's website in the CAnFR Program section. GFOA staff is available during normal business hours to answer questions you may have during the review process.

What are the requirements for serving as a reviewer? An individual does not have to be upper management or have significant experience with external financial reporting to serve as a reviewer. The GFOA encourages those with any experience in local government accounting and financial reporting to join in the review process. You are encouraged to use your time as a reviewer as a tool for professional development and educational purposes. In order to become a reviewer, one should possess a solid understanding of GAAP as established by the Public Sector Accounting Board of the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Jurisdictions that are interested in receiving the more information about the award or individuals who are interested in serving as reviewers for the program should contact Jim Phillips in GFOA's Chicago office (312-977-9700; JPhillips@gfoa.org).

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Most Recent Canadian Award for Financial Reporting (CAnFR) Winners

Congratulations to the following sixty-five jurisdictions for receiving the CAnFR for the fiscal year ended in 2014:

Alberta

City of Airdrie
 City of Brooks
 City of Calgary
 City of Edmonton
 City of Lethbridge
 City of Medicine Hat
 City of St. Albert
 County of Lethbridge
 County of Newell
 Parkland County
 Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo
 Strathcona County
 Sturgeon County
 Town of Stony Plain
 Town of Taber

British Columbia

City of Abbotsford
 City of Burnaby
 City of Coquitlam
 City of Duncan
 City of Fort St. John
 City of Kamloops
 City of Kelowna
 City of Maple Ridge
 City of Port Alberni
 City of Port Moody
 City of Richmond
 City of Salmon Arm
 City of Surrey
 City of Vernon
 City of Victoria
 Corporation of the City of Port Coquitlam
 Corporation of the District of Central Saanich
 Corporation of the District of the North Cowichan
 Corporation of the District of Pitt Meadows
 Corporation of the District of Saanich
 District of Coldstream
 District of Kent
 District of Lake County
 District of Mission
 District of Sechelt
 District of West Vancouver
 Sunshine Coast Regional District
 Town of Oliver

New Brunswick

City of Moncton

Northwest Territories

City of Yellowknife

Ontario

City of Greater Sudbury
 City of Mississauga
 City of Toronto
 Corporation of the City of Brampton
 Corporation of the City of Brantford
 Corporation of the City of Markham
 Corporation of the Town of Oakville
 County of Wellington
 Regional Municipality of Durham
 Regional Municipality of Halton
 Regional Municipality of Niagara
 Regional Municipality of Peel
 Regional Municipality of York
 Town of Caledon
 Town of Milton
 Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

Saskatchewan

City of Prince Albert
 City of Regina

Yukon

Town of Sidney

City of Whitehorse

Canadian Award for Financial Reporting Program Reviewers

The GFOA would like to recognize those reviewers who dedicate their time to the CAnFR program:

CATHY AN Finance Manager, Corporate Financial Reporting, The City of Calgary, Alberta

MARK BEAUPARLANT Manager, Corporate Financial Services, City of Mississauga, Ontario

KRIS BOLAND Manager of Finance, District of Mission, British Columbia

ARCHIE G. JOHNSTON Partner, KPMG Government Services, Burnaby, British Columbia

ALEKS NELSON Senior Financial Advisor, Alberta Municipal Affairs

CHRIS PARKINS Manager, Financial Advisory, Alberta Municipal Affairs

ANTONELLA RISI Principal, Public Sector Accounting, CPA Canada

SCOTT ROSS Manager of Accounting Services – Finance Department, District of Mission, British Columbia

CURTIS SMITH Manager, Policy & Risk Management, Finance Department, Regina, Saskatchewan

PEGGY TOLLETT Treasurer, Town of Caledon, Ontario

KEVIN TRAVERS Audit Partner, KPMG, Toronto, Ontario

THERESA TROTT Finance & Payroll Analyst, Town of Gravenhurst, Ontario

MICHAEL VEENBAAS Director of Financial Services, Fraser Valley Regional District, British Columbia

KALEIGH WILLS Manager of Financial Reporting and Accounting Services, City of Winnipeg, Manitoba

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Most Recent Canadian Popular Annual Financial Report (PAFR) Winners

Congratulations to the following eight jurisdictions for receiving the PAFR Award for the fiscal year ended 2014:

Alberta	British Columbia	Ontario
City of Edmonton	City of Coquitlam	Regional Municipality of York
City of Medicine Hat	City of Richmond	Town of Caledon
	City of Surrey	
	City of Maple Ridge	

Popular Annual Financial Reporting Program Reviewers

The GFOA would like to recognize the following reviewer for dedicating her time to the PAFR program:

MELANIE THERIAULT Management Accounting Analyst, City of Moncton, New Brunswick

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Most Recent Canadian Budget Winners

Congratulations to the following forty-one jurisdictions for receiving the Budget Award for the fiscal year beginning 2015:

Alberta	New Brunswick	Quebec
Airdrie	Moncton	McGill University
Calgary	Nova Scotia	Office municipal d'habitation de Montréal
Edmonton	Municipality of the County of Kings	Quebec
Lethbridge		Société de transport de Montréal
Lethbridge County	Ontario	Université Laval
Mountain View County	Brantford	Université de Sherbrooke
St. Albert	Caledon	
Wood Buffalo	Clearview Township	
British Columbia	Markham	
Coquitlam	Milton	
Kelowna	Mississauga	
Nanaimo	Orangeville	
Port Coquitlam	Regional Municipality of Durham	
Saanich	Regional Municipality of Halton	
Surrey	Regional Municipality of Niagara	
Vernon	Regional Municipality of York	
Victoria	Tecumseh	
West Vancouver	Toronto	
Manitoba	Vaughan	
Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation	Wellington County	

Budget Program Reviewers

The GFOA would like to recognize those reviewers who dedicate their time to the Budget program:

TRACY ANDERSON Director of Corporate Services, County of Lethbridge, Alberta

KAY DOXILY Risk Management Advisor, City of Regina, Saskatchewan

JOHN DUNFIELD Senior Corporate Planner (Retired), City of Calgary, Alberta

STEVEN FAIRWEATHER Deputy City Manager/CFO, City of Cambridge, Ontario

BRUCE FISHER Manager, Financial Policy & Planning, Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia

ROGER GALIPEAU Directeur – Groupe d'Excellence en budgetisation, Center for Interuniversity Research and Analysis of Organizations (CIRANO), Montreal, Quebec

GREGG HOUSER Deputy Treasurer/Controller, City of Moncton, New Brunswick

CHRIS JACYK Senior Corporate Financial Planner, City of Calgary, Alberta

NOREEN KASSAM Assistant Director, Financial Planning & Capital Equity, City of Burnaby, British Columbia
JOEL LUSTIG Treasurer, City of Markham, Ontario
ANDRE MACNEIL Senior Financial Consultant, Halifax Regional Municipality, Nova Scotia
VICTOR MEMA Chief Financial Officer, City of Nanaimo, British Columbia
KOLA OLADIMEJI Director of Finance, Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Alberta
NEETU SHARMA Accountant, Financial Services, City of Edmonton, Alberta
TINA TAPLEY Director of Finance/City Treasurer, The City of Fredericton, New Brunswick
TREVOR THOMPSON Manager of Financial Planning, City of Maple Ridge, British Columbia

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2016 GFOA Annual Conference

Thanks to all who have registered to attend GFOA's 110th Annual Conference, May 22-25, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre in Toronto. GFOA's [Conference Program Guide](#) gives comprehensive information about the conference. Any changes to the program will be made available at the GFOA Message Center and in the *GFOA Today* newspaper on site.

GFOA's mobile site (m.gfoa.org) is also a convenient up-to-date tool to find the latest information about the Annual Conference, session information, maps of the convention center and the City, exhibitors, and GFOA's social media.

If you have not yet signed up yet to attend the conference, there's still time to register – go to [GFOA's website](#) to sign up online or download the registration form to mail, fax, or scan and e-mail to GFOA.

Unable to attend the full conference? Interested in sending junior staff to participate?

Take advantage of the one-day rate registration fee on May 23 or 24. [Click here](#) for registration information.

If you have questions about the conference, go to [GFOA's FAQs](#) or [contact GFOA](#).

We look forward to seeing you in Toronto.

Canada Day at GFOA's Annual Conference

As part of the GFOA's 110th Annual Conference, a complimentary Canadian-focused program will take place on the morning of Sunday, May 22, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

The program will begin with a keynote speaker and will include sessions of common concern from a specifically Canadian perspective. A lunch will be provided. While advance registration is required, there is no extra charge for those who are already registered for the Annual Conference. Sunday afternoon's concurrent sessions will include sessions specific to Canadian topics.

Attached is a [full agenda](#) of the day's events and information about other Canadian speakers who will be speaking throughout conference, as well as information about a gathering of Canadian delegates hosted by the Committee on Canadian Issues that will take place at the Steam Whistle Brewery on Monday evening.

For those attending Sunday morning's program and lunch, we request that you submit an [RSVP](#), which will serve as your registration for the event.

If you have any questions about the program, please contact [Jim Phillips](#).

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GFOA of Western Canada's 2016 Conference

The 2016 conference, focused around the theme of "Making Connections Count," will be held in Kelowna from September 21st to 23rd, 2016. For more information about the conference, please see the [conference brochure](#).

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GFOA Scholarships

Each year, GFOA provides academic scholarships to students interested in a career in government finance. Applications for GFOA scholarships are usually available in November and due sometime in February. For more information, visit [GFOA's scholarship page](#).

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