



ROMA Conference

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Program

The following program is continually being updated. Details will be added as they are confirmed.

Sunday, January 23

12:30 – 5:00pm

Info Booth Open and Delegation Meetings

Monday, January 24

8:15 – 8:25am

Welcome, O Canada

8:25 – 9:10am

Opening Keynote: How Municipalities Can and Should Work with Indigenous Peoples, Chief Perry Bellegarde, Former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

Chief Perry Bellegarde has dedicated his life to championing the rights and well-being of First Nations. For 35 years, he has held various First Nations leadership roles, including two terms served as the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN). Chief Bellegarde believes passionately that at the heart of the original Treaty relationship sits a vision of peace and friendship that is the key to building a better and brighter future for Canada.

A member of Little Black Bear First Nation, Chief Bellegarde credits the wisdom shared by the First Nations Elders of Saskatchewan for instilling in him a deep sense of pride in his culture, as well as a lasting conviction that Indigenous knowledge and values are crucial to building a more just and inclusive society. He describes himself as an *oskâpêwis*, a Cree word meaning “helper”, and he believes this understanding of the role and responsibilities of a leader applies to many walks of life.

Chief Bellegarde has championed that vision through all his leadership roles. As National Chief, Chief Bellegarde campaigned tirelessly to close the gap in the quality of life between First Nations and other families in Canada. He led the AFN through a period of profound transformation in public awareness of First Nations concerns and priorities. Critical accomplishments include the passage of Canada’s first national legislation recognizing and protecting Indigenous languages, much needed changes in how government services in First Nations communities are funded, and securing a legal commitment to national implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In recognition of his work, Chief Bellegarde has been awarded the Confederation Medal, the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal, and both the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and Golden Jubilee Medal. In 2018, he was recognized with the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, and in 2019, was awarded an Honourary Doctorate of Laws from Queen’s University for his extraordinary contribution to public service, arts, culture, law, and government. The Empire Club of Canada has recently selected Chief Bellegarde as The Nation Builder of the Year Award 2021.

9:10 – 9:30am

ROMA Update and AGM
Robin Jones, Chair
Afshin Majidi, Secretary Treasurer

9:30 – 9:40am

Jamie McGarvey, AMO President

9:40 – 9:50am

[The Hon. Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario](#)

9:50 - 10:00am

The Hon. Gudie Hutchings, Minister of Rural Economic Development

10:00 – 10:30am	Break and Meet with Exhibitors
10:30 - 11:45am	<p>Concurrent Session A</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Navigating the New Regulations under the Conservation Authorities Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The changes outlining what and how Conservative Authorities are to do business are completed. Now comes the work of transitioning to this new model. Hear from three points of view (council, staff, and CA leadership) on top priorities, major challenges and advice on how to be successful. 2. Human Services Transformation for Poverty Reduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poverty has taken on a new dimension with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The unique characteristics of poverty in rural and northern areas will be explored with discussion of the current human service transformation initiatives that can help reduce it. 3. Community Safety and Well Being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This session will explore the challenges and opportunities that Community Safety and Well Being planning presents for Ontario municipalities. With a rural lens, panelists will discuss how they met the July 1, 2020 deadline to have a plan in place and how they are moving forward with the CSWB plan implementation.
11:45 – 12:45pm	Lunch and Zone Networking Sessions
12:45 – 2:00pm	<p>Concurrent Session B</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Continued Quest to Improve Connectivity in Ontario <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learn about the state of connectivity in rural Ontario. 2. Homelessness in Rural Ontario: Challenges and Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examining the unique context of homelessness in rural and northern Ontario, this session will showcase initiatives and recommendations that can be implemented in communities, ultimately working toward the goal of ending homelessness in Ontario.
2:00 – 2:30pm	Break and Meet with Exhibitors
2:30 – 2:40pm	Andrea Horwath, Leader of the Official Opposition and NDP
2:40 - 2:45pm	A Message from Intact Public Entities
2:45 – 3:25pm	<p>Opportunities for Rural Ontario: Post-COVID Recovery</p> <p>ROMA recommendations and strategies on the recovery and growth plans for Ontario's rural communities</p>
3:25 - 3:35 pm	<p>Filling the Housing Information Gap in Rural Communities</p> <p>Learn about the partnership between The Rural Ontario Institute, Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus and IT firm Itergy, that addresses a housing shortfall through the creation of an innovative digital tool.</p>
3:35 - 3:50pm	The Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
3:50 - 4:35pm	<p>Ministers' Forum: Adapting Health and Social Services for Rural Communities in a Post-Pandemic Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hon. Doug Downey, Attorney General • The Hon. Merrilee Fullerton, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services • The Hon. Jane McKenna, Associate Minister of Children and Women's Issues • The Hon. Parm Gill, Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism • The Hon. Jill Dunlop, Minister of Colleges and Universities • The Hon. Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education • The Hon. Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development • The Hon. Christine Elliott, Minister of Health • The Hon. Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions • The Hon. Paul Calandra, Minister of Long-Term Care • The Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

- The Hon. Raymond Cho, Minister of Seniors and Accessibility
- The Hon. Sylvia Jones, Solicitor General

Tuesday, January 25

8:00 – 8:30am

Meet with Exhibitors

8:30 - 8:32am

The Hon. Helena Jaczek, Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario

8:32 – 9:05am

The Role of Science in Policy: Dr. Bruce Lourie, Influential Environmental Policy Expert and Bestselling Author

Co-author of international bestseller *Slow Death by Rubber Duck*, Dr. Bruce Lourie is one of Canada's most influential leaders and thinkers in the environment sector. He has been instrumental in the creation of more than a dozen organizations that play critical roles in sustainability in Canada and abroad, and initiated the largest climate action in North America — phasing out coal in Ontario. Speaking on topics such as getting to net zero to solve climate change, energy systems transition, the role of ESG and sustainable finance, toxic pollution, non-profit leadership, and more, Lourie brings a unique ability to translate complex issues into timely and actionable information.

As one of the country's foremost experts in integrating climate science and policy, Dr. Lourie will delve into how best to navigate the complexity and cut to the chase on the most recent and relevant ideas for managing climate risk and transitioning to a net-zero economy by exploring the following questions:

- How do we use climate science to inform policy?
- What are the fires and floods telling us about climate policy urgency?
- How do communities make decisions regarding climate resilient infrastructure and buildings?
- What is the science telling us about agricultural risk?
- And who do we trust? Which organizations? Which people?

9:05 - 9:15am

Steven Del Duca, Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario

9:15 – 10:00am

Michael J. Smither Question Box Panel

- Shawn Everitt, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of The Blue Mountains
- Jody Johnson, Director, Legal Services, Halton Region
- Andy Jones, Chief Building Official, Town of Gravenhurst
- Sid Vander Veen, Drainage Specialist, R. J. Burnside & Associates Limited
- Robert Walton, General Manager - Operations, County of Brant
- Sandra Weber, Director, Huron County Planning and Development Department

Delegates attending the conference can submit questions for the Question Box Panel [here](#).

10:00 – 10:30am

Break and Networking Events

10:30 - 11:45am

Concurrent Session A

1. Fines and Enforcement: Advancing the Local Administration of Justice
 - Penalties and fines are an important part of administering justice in your municipality. Learn what steps the Ministry of the Attorney General has taken to improve municipal fine collection and how your municipality can control roadway speeds using automated enforcement in specific areas.
2. Taking a Pulse Check on Rural and Northern Health
 - Access to health services is a challenge in rural and northern Ontario. To help meet the needs of residents, a diverse panel will examine the current situation and discuss opportunities for innovative solutions.

11:45 – 12:45pm	Lunch and Networking Events
12:45 – 2:00pm	<p>Concurrent Session B</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Climate Change and Municipalities: How Community Energy Plans and Land Use Planning Can Help <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The goal of this session is to broaden participants' understanding of how climate change, energy and land-use planning intersect, and provide an overview of scale-able and accessible solutions for municipalities of all sizes. 2. Innovative Housing Solutions in Rural Ontario <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New strategies and partnerships are required to address the housing crisis and support affordable home ownership opportunities in rural Ontario. This session will showcase innovations and partnerships with the potential to be applied in communities across rural and northern Ontario.
2:00 – 2:30pm	Meet with Exhibitors
2:30 – 2:40pm	Mike Schreiner, Leader, Green Party of Ontario
2:40 - 2:45pm	A Message from IESO: The Municipal Role in Meeting Ontario's Energy Needs. Sponsored by IESO.
2:45 – 3:15pm	Post-COVID Recovery: Opportunities in Practice for Rural Ontario
3:15 - 3:30pm	The Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
3:30 - 3:35pm	A Message from NWMO
3:35 - 3:50pm	The Hon. Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure
3:50 - 4:35pm	<p>Ministers' Forum: Sparking Rural Economic Growth with the Environment, Infrastructure and Resource Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs • The Hon. Victor Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade • The Hon. Nina Tangri, Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction • The Hon. Todd Smith, Minister of Energy • The Hon. David Piccini, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks • The Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy, Minister of Finance • The Hon. Kaleed Rasheed, Associate Minister of Digital Government • The Hon. Ross Romano, Minister of Government and Consumer Services • The Hon. Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure • The Hon. Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing • The Hon. Greg Rickford, Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Natural Resources and Forestry / Indigenous Affairs • The Hon. Caroline Mulroney, Minister of Transportation / Francophone Affairs • The Hon. Stan Cho, Associate Minister of Transportation