



# 2026 Mountain Refresher

May 12 to 15, 2026

## Register Today!

Registration received on or before March 1, will be eligible for the **EARLY BIRD DRAW** (Three nights accommodation at the Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge, Kananaskis Village).

[Register Here](#)

## Discover Inspiration, Learning, and Connection in the Heart of the Rockies!

Join municipal leaders, managers, and sector experts for an unforgettable professional development experience at the **2026 Mountain Refresher** set against the breathtaking backdrop of Kananaskis Village.

This year's program features **dynamic sessions, practical insights, and thought-provoking discussions** designed to strengthen leadership, sharpen policy understanding, and elevate performance in today's challenging municipal environment.

Stay, learn, and connect at the **Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge**, where every session, conversation, and experience is just steps from your door.

**Bring your partner** and make it a memorable getaway! From the signature **Kananaskis Scramble** to scenic hikes, horseback adventures, or simply unwinding at the spa, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Mark your calendar, gather your colleagues, and prepare for a **refreshing mix of learning and leisure** in beautiful Kananaskis!

## Special Events ~ Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge

### Trade Show & Welcome Reception

*A great chance to connect with professionals who work with local governments and to catch up with colleagues from around the province.*

- Tuesday, May 12
- Exhibition: 5:00 to 9:00 pm
- Welcome Reception: 5:30 to 9:00 pm

### Awards Banquet

*Join us for our wrap-up banquet, where we'll share a great meal, and recognize this year's award recipients.*

- Thursday, May 14
- 6:30 to 10:00 pm



## Registration Fees:

- Before March 1, \$649 + GST
  - After March 1, \$749 + GST
- (cancellations will be accepted until April 21. A service fee of \$125 will apply.)*

## Accommodation

- Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge
- \$253/night *(plus applicable tax)*
- ph.1.833.440.1964
- When booking your accommodations, please quote conference booking: SLG.

[Book Online](#)

## Registration

- Tuesday, May 12
- 11:30 am to 4:30 pm
- Pomeroy Kananaskis Mountain Lodge Conference Centre

*Throughout the workshop, we invite participants to dress business casual, with semi-formal attire for the awards banquet.*



## Tuesday, May 12

### Leading Through Conflict Without Losing Your Nerve

1:30 to 4:30 pm

Presented by Christina Benty

Conflict is an inevitable feature of senior leadership in local government. Competing priorities, heightened public scrutiny, political dynamics, and resource constraints can quickly turn everyday tensions into defining moments. The question is not whether conflict will arise but how you lead when it does.

This session explores what it means to lead through conflict with clarity, courage, and emotional steadiness. Drawing on real-world municipal experience, participants will examine how conflict shows up in themselves, in their teams, and in relationships with elected officials—and how unexamined reactions can quietly erode trust and effectiveness.

Participants will learn practical strategies to stay regulated under pressure, offer fearless advice without escalating tension, and remain relationally connected when conversations get uncomfortable. This is an invitation to stay in the room—grounded, non-anxious, and intentional—so conflict becomes a catalyst for better decisions, stronger relationships, and more resilient leadership.

## Wednesday, May 13

### Why We Lead

9:00 am to 12:00 or 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm

Presented by Karen Elliott

The changing dynamics of candidates and Councils, policy change provincially and federally, staff demands for a safe and engaging workplace, and citizen's lack of understanding of, and trust in local government make for a rocky leadership landscape. Your leadership matters more than ever. We'll examine current influences on local government, and then through a combination of theory, practical examples and group discussion, we'll work together to identify strategies to support you and your leadership with Council, staff and the public. Bring your experience, questions, empathy and sense of humour and take some time to invest in yourself. Whether the road feels rocky or things are smooth going, this session is for everyone.

### Alberta Ombudsman's Office – Making Administratively Fair Decisions

9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Presented by TBA, Alberta Ombudsman

In 2018, changes to the *Ombudsman Act* expanded the Ombudsman's authority to investigate any administrative decision, recommendation, act, or omission of a municipality. If a citizen feels they were treated unfairly when accessing a municipal program or service, they can call the Ombudsman's office.

This interactive session covers:

**Administrative Fairness Guidelines** – administrative fairness describes the process a public body follows when it applies its governing rules consistently, respects people's rights and provides clear, timely and reasonable decisions. This session will provide an overview of the Ombudsman's office and the eight administrative fairness guidelines it applies as a core standard when assessing complaints.

**Writing Administratively Fair Decisions** – good administrative decisions explain *what* was decided and *why*. This interactive part of the session focuses on the element's decision makers should include in a decision, common pitfalls, writing tips and a case study for the group to work through together

Session participants will also learn what to expect if there is a complaint about a municipal decision, including an understanding of the office's role and how the office works to resolve complaints.

Quick glimpse at what is offered for Days 1 & 2

## Day 1

Tuesday, May 12

- **Leading Through Conflict Without Losing Your Nerve – Keynote** (1/2 day, afternoon)
- **CLGM MRC Trade Show & Welcome Reception** (Exhibition: 5:00 to 9:00 pm & Reception: 5:30 to 9:00 pm)

## Day 2

Wednesday, May 13

- **Why We Lead**
- (1/2 day session chose between morning or afternoon)
- **Alberta Ombudsman's Office – Making Administratively Fair Decisions** (1/2 day morning session)
- Check out next page for more Day 2 sessions!





## Wednesday, May 13

### HR Session: "Next Generation CAO"

9:00 am 12:00 noon or 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm  
Presented by Anurag Shourie, Leaders International

How do you prepare to transition yourself to being the municipal leader of tomorrow in an ever-changing workplace landscape? What are the essential skills you need to compete with the demands of a multi-generational workforce, shortage of talent, political influences and a citizens' wish list of demands.

What style of leaderships suits best to meet needs of Council, staff and public. How do you ace performance management and contract evaluation meetings? Join us in an interactive session of learning including discussions, shared experiences and diversity of thought and approaches

### Alberta Ombudsman's Office – Addressing Complex Behaviours Fairly

1:30 pm to 4:30 pm  
Presented by TBA, Alberta Ombudsman

In recent years, the Alberta Ombudsman's Office has seen a rise in persistent, unpredictable and even aggressive interactions from individuals. We understand this trend may also affect municipalities across Alberta, especially smaller or rural communities where a single resident can consume substantial time and resources. The Office has also noted an increase in complaints from residents who have been restricted by their municipality.

This interactive session covers:

**The Role of the Alberta Ombudsman's Office** – this provides an overview of the Office's mandate, its approach to administrative fairness, what municipalities can expect during an investigation or complaint review, and how the office supports fair and transparent decision-making.

**Fairly Addressing Complex Behaviours and High-Flyer Issues** – this includes tools and strategies the Office uses to engage with individuals who demonstrate challenging or escalating behaviours, balancing person-centered service with staff safety, and approaches for managing persistent, high-impact complainants in municipal contexts.

Session participants will also learn what the office looks for in administratively fair bylaws and policies, how it investigates complaints about resident restrictions, tangible resources available to municipalities, and considerations for fair and safe communication which would include social media.

## Thursday, May 14

### Legal Stream I: "ATIA and POPA: What's That and What You Need to Know"

9:00 am to 12:00 noon  
Presented by Lorne Randa, Brownlee LLP

Alberta's new *Access to Information Act* ("ATIA") and *Protection of Privacy Act* ("POPA") came into force in June 2025, bringing an end to the FOIP Act and beginning a new regime in access to information and privacy for public bodies. This presentation will provide an overview of the major changes to the legislation, explain what this means for local public bodies such as municipalities and what is required to ensure compliance, and discuss some frequently asked questions about access to information and protection of privacy for municipalities.

## Day 2 (continued)

Wednesday, May 13

- **HR Session: Next Generation CAO** (1/2 day session, chose between morning or afternoon)
- **Alberta Ombudsman's Office: Addressing Complex Behaviours Fairly** (1/2 day afternoon session)
- **Free Evening to explore on your own**

## Day 3

Thursday, May 14

- **Legal Stream I: ATIA and POPA: What's That and What You Need to Know** (1/2 day morning session)
- **Check out next page for more Day 3 sessions!**





## Thursday, May 14

### **R & R: Revisiting & Reinventing the Basics of Municipal Management – “Land Use Planning Bylaws: What They are, How They’re Made, and How to Pass Them”**

9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Presented by Shelley Der and Trevor McPherson, Alberta Municipal Affairs

The Municipal Government Act requires municipalities to establish specific planning bylaws – statutory plans and a land use bylaw. This session will explain what these bylaws are, what they do, and how they work together to manage land use and development in a municipality. Then, we will discuss some of the processes municipalities may use to collect and incorporate input from important stakeholders such as the development industry, other departments within the municipality itself, adjacent municipalities, and the public. Finally, we will discuss requirements and considerations for passing these bylaws.

### **Building Leadership Presence in Municipal Leaders**

9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Presented by Jeannette Austen, EXCELLO

In municipal leadership, presence is established long before decisions are made. How you show up—with council, staff, community members, and during moments of pressure—shapes trust, credibility, and organizational effectiveness. This interactive workshop is designed for senior municipal leaders who want to strengthen their leadership presence in a way that is authentic, steady, and aligned with public service responsibility. Leadership presence is not about title or charisma; it is about the consistent attitudes, behaviours, and signals conveyed in every interaction, especially in complex and highly visible environments. Participants will explore how values, communication style, and leadership behaviours work together to reinforce confidence, clarity, and trust. Through guided reflection, discussion, and practical application, leaders will gain tools to manage impressions with integrity, maintain composure under pressure, and communicate impact without discomfort. The session addresses credibility, executive presence, confidence, body language, connection, and leading effectively under scrutiny—ensuring presence supports strong governance, sound decision-making, and healthy working relationships.

### **AI in Local Government: Policy, Practice, and Public Trust**

9:00 am 12:00 noon or 1:30 pm to 4:30 pm

Presented by Chantal Ritcey and Reanne Newell, AltaML

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly shaping how local governments deliver services, manage information, and engage citizens. This session introduces municipal leaders to AI’s fundamentals — what it is, how it learns, and how it’s transforming operations. Participants will explore how to establish responsible AI policies that align with POPA and PIPA, set acceptable use standards, and mitigate privacy risks, including staff misuse of generative tools.

The discussion will cover risk management, quality assurance, and liability considerations when AI produces incorrect outputs. Managers will gain insights into workforce change management, training approaches, and ethical oversight to prevent overreliance on unverified results.

Participants will see practical demonstrations of prompt engineering, data analysis, and productivity tools such as ChatGPT Enterprise and Microsoft Copilot, with attention to emerging issues like deepfakes and misinformation — and how municipalities can build confidence and trust while adopting AI responsibly.

## Day 3 (continued)

Thursday, May 14

- **R & R: Revisiting & Reinventing the Basics of Municipal Management: Land Use Planning Bylaws: What They are, How They’re Made, and How to Pass Them** (1/2 day morning session)
- **Building Leadership Presence in Municipal Leaders** (1/2 day morning session)
- **AI in Local Government: Policy, Practice, and Public Trust** (1/2 day session, chose between morning or afternoon)
- Check out next page for more Day 3 sessions!



## Thursday, May 14

### Legal Stream II: "Redefining Municipal Autonomy – 2024 to Present"

1:30 to 4:30 pm

Presented by TBA, Brownlee LLP

This session will be an exploration and discussion relating to the 2024 and 2025 amendments to the MGA and due to the Provincial Priorities Act, as they relate to Codes of Conduct, Natural Person Powers, new limits on bylaw authority and federal grants to municipal corporations. What do these changes mean in the context of municipal autonomy, municipalities as delegates of provincial authority and the ability of municipalities to provide good local government?

### R & R: Revisiting & Reinventing the Basics of Municipal Management – "Policy, Legislation and Municipal Indicators"

1:30 to 4:30 pm

Presented by TBA, Alberta Municipal Affairs

Have you ever wondered how government policy is made, or how policy gets turned into legislation? This work can be very complex, with many factors to take into account. From cross jurisdictional research to stakeholder engagement, from cabinet reports to "How a Bill becomes a Law", there's more to it than most people realize. While we might sometimes say, *making policy and legislation is a lot like making sausage, you don't want to see what goes into it*, join us for an informative session about how policy comes together, how legislation is drafted and what drives our work. We'll also provide an overview of Municipal Indicators, including:

- How the Financial Information Returns (FIR), Tax Rate Bylaws, elections data, and municipal censuses are used and answers to common questions about these;
- Demonstrating how municipalities can explore and interact with their own data through the Municipal Affairs dashboards; and
- How the Municipal Indicators are calculated and used by Municipal Affairs.

### Leading for Sustainable Organizational Performance

1:30 to 4:30 pm

Presented by Jeannette Austin, EXCELLO

This practical and engaging workshop supports municipal leaders in understanding how stress, morale, and human capacity directly influence organizational performance, continuity, and risk. Just as infrastructure failures demand immediate, coordinated action, the wellbeing of people requires the same level of leadership attention and intention. In complex municipal environments, unaddressed stress, burnout, and declining morale can quietly erode engagement, decision-making, and service delivery.

Designed for senior leaders, managers, and emerging leaders, this session explores how acute, chronic, and cumulative stress shows up in daily work and leadership responsibilities. Participants will examine how stress impacts mental, emotional, and physical health—and how those effects ripple across teams, shaping culture, absenteeism, and retention. Using practical tools such as the Personal Factor Wheel, leaders will learn to recognize early warning signs, intervene proactively, and strengthen morale. Participants leave with actionable strategies to protect capacity, foster wellbeing, and create conditions where people and performance can sustainably thrive.

## Day 3 (continued)

Thursday, May 14

- **Legal Stream II: Redefining Municipal Autonomy – 2024 to Present**  
(1/2 day afternoon session)
- **R & R: Revisiting & Reinventing the Basics of Municipal Management: Policy, Legislation, and Municipal Indicators**  
(1/2 day afternoon session)
- **Leading for Sustainable Organizational Performance**  
(1/2 day afternoon session)
- **Awards Banquet**  
(6:30 to 10:00 pm)

SOCIETY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGERS OF ALBERTA

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