

2026 FCM Annual Conference and Trade Show Report

Rural Municipality of Piney

Conference Attendance Dates:

June 4–7, 2026

Report Date:

June 2026



Prepared by the FCM Attendance Committee

1. Executive Summary

Three councillors and the CAO (Committee) attended the 2026 Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual Conference and Trade Show in Edmonton, Alberta. This report provides an overview of the knowledge gained, relationships built, and overall value derived from participation in one of Canada's largest gatherings of municipal leaders.

The conference delivered a comprehensive and progressively structured learning experience. Over four days, sessions, workshops, study tours, and networking opportunities built upon one another—transforming initial exposure into a deeper understanding of municipal governance, infrastructure planning, funding opportunities, and community development. What initially appeared as a broad introduction evolved into a cohesive and practical framework for addressing local challenges.

A key outcome of the conference was increased awareness of available funding opportunities, particularly through programs such as the Green Municipal Fund (GMF). These programs provide significant grant and financing opportunities that can support infrastructure, climate adaptation, and sustainability initiatives within the Rural Municipality of Piney. Even a single successful funding application has the potential to offset the entire cost of conference attendance.

The conference also provided valuable exposure to a wide range of vendors and municipal service providers, offering practical solutions tailored to municipal needs. This included tools for communication, emergency preparedness, environmental management, infrastructure planning, and tourism development. For a rural municipality, this concentrated access to national-level expertise and innovation represents a significant advantage, enabling informed decision-making and identification of potential project partners.

Participation in workshops focusing on governance and leadership, particularly those addressing council roles, responsibilities, and conflict management, delivered immediate and actionable value. These sessions reinforced the importance of clear role separation between Council and administration, structured onboarding following elections, and proactive approaches to maintaining effective governance. These insights can be directly applied to strengthen organizational stability and decision-making within the municipality. The study tours further enhanced the conference experience by providing real-world examples of municipal initiatives, including reconciliation efforts through Indigenous partnerships and approaches to civic engagement and transparency in municipal governance.

Equally important was the opportunity to engage in national networking and knowledge exchange. Conversations with municipal leaders from across Canada—ranging from small rural communities to large urban centres—provided valuable perspective on shared challenges, including housing, infrastructure, economic development, and environmental sustainability. These discussions reinforced that while municipalities face unique

circumstances, many challenges are common, and solutions can be adapted across jurisdictions.

The Committee also participated in the FCM Annual General Meeting, gaining a better understanding of the organization's governance, advocacy efforts, and strategic direction. This participation supports alignment with national municipal priorities and strengthens the municipality's connection to broader advocacy efforts.

Overall, attendance at the FCM Annual Conference provided significant value to the Rural Municipality of Piney through:

- Enhanced understanding of funding opportunities and national programs
- Access to innovative tools, vendors, and service providers
- Practical governance and leadership strategies
- Exposure to successful municipal initiatives and case studies
- Expansion of professional networks across Canada
- Increased awareness of national trends and emerging issues

The conference demonstrated a clear return on investment, both immediately through knowledge gained and over the long term through opportunities for funding, partnerships, and improved municipal practices.

Continued participation in future FCM conferences is strongly recommended, as it ensures the municipality remains informed, connected, and well-positioned to respond to evolving challenges while advancing opportunities for growth and sustainability.



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2. Purpose of Attendance

The purpose of attending the 2026 Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual Conference and Trade Show was to strengthen the Rural Municipality of Piney’s capacity in governance, planning, and service delivery through exposure to national best practices, funding opportunities, and innovative municipal solutions.

Attendance provided the opportunity to:

- Gain practical knowledge through workshops and study tours relevant to rural municipal operations
- Develop a stronger understanding of federal programs and funding streams, including the Green Municipal Fund
- Engage with vendors and service providers offering tools and solutions applicable to municipal needs
- Network with municipal leaders from across Canada to share experiences, challenges, and proven approaches
- Enhance the municipality’s readiness to respond to emerging issues such as housing, infrastructure, climate adaptation, and governance

Participation in the conference supports informed decision-making at both the administrative and Council level, while positioning the Rural Municipality of Piney to take advantage of opportunities that contribute to long-term sustainability and growth.

3. Day 1 Overview – FCM Annual Conference and Trade Show (June 4, 2026)

Day 1 of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual Conference and Trade Show in Edmonton provided a comprehensive introduction to the convention, offering a combination of study tours, workshops, and networking opportunities. The event brought together over 1,500 municipal leaders from across Canada to share knowledge, explore solutions, and build connections.

The day included a structured program of activities designed to provide both practical learning and strategic insight. Key highlights included:

- Attendance at a Green Municipal Fund (GMF) workshop focused on climate adaptation and funding opportunities
- Participation in the Regional Members' Meeting for western and northern rural municipalities
- Exposure to broader conference programming addressing issues such as climate adaptation, equity, and community development.
- A learning opportunity on how the overall FCM Convention unfolds and how attendees can maximize their experience and grow their knowledge.

Key Outcomes from Day 1

Day 1 delivered significant value across several areas relevant to municipal leadership:

- **Strategic Learning:** Sessions provided practical tools and real-world examples related to climate adaptation, governance, and reconciliation.
- **Funding Awareness:** Increased understanding of available federal funding programs, particularly through the Green Municipal Fund.
- **Regional Alignment:** The regional meeting reinforced current priorities and advocacy efforts affecting rural municipalities in western and northern Canada.
- **Early Networking Opportunities:** Engagement with peers, FCM representatives, and vendors began to establish relationships that can support future municipal initiatives.

Value to the Municipality

The first day of the conference set a strong foundation for the remainder of the event by combining education, networking, and exposure to innovative municipal practices. The information gathered directly supports:

- Improved decision-making at the administrative and Council level
- Identification of funding and partnership opportunities
- Strengthened awareness of national and regional municipal priorities
- Enhanced capacity to address local challenges through informed approaches

Overall, Day 1 demonstrated clear value in terms of knowledge acquisition, relationship building, and identifying opportunities that can benefit the Rural Municipality of Piney both immediately and in the long term.

Workshop Attendance: Green Municipal Fund (GMF) – Climate Adaptation

On the first day of the convention, members of the Committee attended a Green Municipal Fund (GMF) workshop focused on increasing awareness of available programming and funding opportunities for municipalities. This session was particularly relevant given the growing need for communities to proactively address climate-related risks.

The workshop highlighted the reality that municipalities across Canada are experiencing climate impacts with increasing frequency and severity. It emphasized the importance of advancing climate adaptation strategies at the local level, regardless of municipal size, and demonstrated how proactive and equitable planning can create long-term resilience.

Facilitated by Geneviève Thouin, Director of Adaptation Programs for the Green Municipal Fund, the session provided practical tools, case studies, and peer examples of how municipalities are successfully implementing climate adaptation initiatives.

Key Observations and Takeaways

- **Significant Funding Opportunities:** The Green Municipal Fund offers substantial grant and financing opportunities that are currently underutilized by many municipalities. Increasing awareness and understanding of these programs is critical.
- **Relevance to Rural Municipalities:** Although examples included communities of varying sizes, the tools and frameworks presented are adaptable to rural municipalities, including the Rural Municipality of Piney.
- **Climate Adaptation is Urgent:** Municipalities must begin or accelerate planning efforts to mitigate risks related to extreme weather, infrastructure strain, and environmental change.
- **Practical Tools and Resources:** Participants were provided with actionable guidance on how to begin or advance climate adaptation projects, including funding pathways and planning supports.
- **Networking with Program Leaders:** The session provided direct exposure to GMF leadership, creating an opportunity for future engagement and potential support.

Value to the Municipality

This workshop reinforced the importance of actively pursuing external funding opportunities to support municipal priorities. Improved understanding of GMF programs positions the municipality to:

- Access grant funding for infrastructure and environmental initiatives
- Reduce financial burden on local taxpayers
- Support long-term sustainability and resilience planning
- Align municipal projects with national funding priorities

Participation in this session represents a strong return on investment, as even a single successful GMF-funded project could significantly exceed the cost of attending the convention.

Workshop Attendance: Winning the Investment – How to Structure Policies that Build Destinations

A Committee member attended the workshop “*Winning the Investment: How to Structure Policies that Build Destinations*,” which focused on how municipalities can align policies and planning frameworks to attract investment and support tourism and economic development.

The session explored how municipalities can become “investment ready” by creating the right conditions for private capital, particularly in developing tourism assets and destination-based economies.

Key Observations and Takeaways

- Investment Readiness: Municipalities must align policies, infrastructure, and planning to create an environment attractive to investors.
- Importance of Strategic Planning: Long-term planning and clearly defined municipal goals are critical to securing external investment.
- Use of Incentives and Tools: The workshop highlighted:
 - Policy tools that encourage development
 - Non-monetary incentives such as streamlined approvals and supportive planning processes
- Tourism as an Economic Driver: Developing local assets—natural, cultural, or recreational—can create opportunities for economic growth in smaller communities.
- Real-World Case Studies: Examples demonstrated how municipalities successfully attracted investment by aligning policy with opportunity.

Value to the Municipality

This workshop was highly relevant to the RM of Piney’s potential for tourism and economic development. Key benefits include:

- Insight into how to position the municipality as investment-ready
- Practical strategies to attract tourism and private sector development
- Ideas to leverage local assets such as natural areas and recreation opportunities
- Improved understanding of how municipal policy can influence economic growth outcomes

Regional Members’ Meeting (Western and Northern Rural Municipalities)

The Committee attended the Regional Members’ Meeting held from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m., which focused on issues, initiatives, and advocacy efforts specific to western and northern rural municipalities.

This session provided a targeted opportunity to receive updates directly from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) on current projects, priorities, and advocacy efforts affecting rural communities. The information shared was highly relevant to the operational and strategic realities faced by municipalities such as the Rural Municipality of Piney.

The meeting included participation from key FCM representatives, including former Executive Director of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM), Joe Masi, whose extensive experience and understanding of rural municipal challenges contributed to meaningful and informed discussion.

Key Observations and Takeaways

- **Focused Rural Advocacy:** FCM continues to actively represent the interests of western and northern rural municipalities, ensuring their unique challenges are recognized at the national level.
- **Relevant Program Updates:** The session provided insight into current initiatives and projects underway that may directly impact or benefit rural municipalities.
- **Experienced Leadership:** The involvement of individuals such as Joe Masi enhances confidence that rural perspectives are well understood and effectively communicated within FCM.
- **Peer Engagement:** The meeting presented an opportunity to hear common concerns and priorities shared by other rural municipalities, reinforcing that many challenges are regionally consistent.

Value to the Municipality

Participation in this regional session ensures the municipality remains informed and connected to broader advocacy efforts that influence funding, policy, and programming decisions at the federal level. It also strengthens the municipality's position by:

- Keeping leadership informed of emerging opportunities and risks
- Ensuring alignment with regional and national municipal priorities
- Providing confidence that rural interests are being strongly represented
- Supporting informed decision-making at the Council level

This session demonstrated the importance of continued participation in FCM activities to maintain awareness of evolving initiatives and to ensure the municipality's interests remain part of the national conversation.

4. Day 2 Overview – FCM Annual Conference and Trade Show (June 5, 2026)

Day 2 of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual Conference and Trade Show was a full and highly structured day focused on national-level discussions, technical learning sessions, and expanded networking opportunities. The programming emphasized collaboration, innovation, and addressing key challenges facing municipalities across Canada.

The day began with the Opening Ceremony, followed by keynote addresses from federal leadership, including the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister responsible for Canada-U.S. Trade and Intergovernmental Affairs, and the Honourable Gregor Robertson, Minister of Housing and Infrastructure. These presentations reinforced the federal government's priorities related to housing, infrastructure investment, and intergovernmental collaboration.

An opening plenary session titled "*Building Big Things Together*" further highlighted the importance of coordinated efforts between municipalities, provinces, and the federal government to address complex national challenges.

Key Areas of Participation

Throughout the day, the Committee participated in a variety of activities, including:

- Attendance at keynote sessions and plenary discussions focusing on national municipal priorities such as housing, infrastructure, and economic development
- Participation in workshops addressing practical municipal challenges, including topics such as:
 - Flood and wildfire prevention
 - Municipal case law
 - Housing construction
 - Artificial intelligence in municipal operations
- Engagement with the Trade Show, featuring over 170 exhibitors providing services, technology, and solutions for municipalities

Key Observations and Takeaways

- **Strong Federal-Municipal Alignment:** Keynote addresses and plenary discussions emphasized the growing importance of collaboration between all levels of government, particularly in addressing housing shortages and infrastructure pressures.
- **Focus on Emerging Risks:** Workshops addressing climate-related risks (such as flooding and wildfires) reinforced the need for municipalities to proactively plan for environmental challenges.
- **Innovation and Modernization:** Sessions on topics such as artificial intelligence highlighted the increasing role of technology in improving municipal efficiency and service delivery.
- **Extensive Vendor Exposure:** With more than 170 exhibitors present, the trade show provided significant exposure to new tools, services, and solutions that could support municipal operations, infrastructure planning, and asset management.

Networking Outcomes

Day 2 provided substantial opportunities for relationship building:

- Engagement with federal representatives and program leaders, supporting future funding discussions and partnerships

- Connections with vendors and service providers, identifying potential opportunities for operational improvements
- Networking with municipal peers from across Canada, enabling knowledge sharing and benchmarking of practices
- Participation in social networking events, strengthening professional relationships in a more informal setting

Value to the Municipality

Day 2 significantly advanced the overall return on investment of attending the FCM conference by combining strategic insight, technical learning, and relationship building.

Key benefits to the municipality include:

- Increased awareness of federal priorities and funding directions, particularly in housing and infrastructure
- Identification of innovative tools and service providers that may support municipal operations
- Enhanced understanding of emerging risks and best practices, especially related to climate resilience
- Strengthened professional network to support future collaboration and information sharing

Overall, Day 2 reinforced the importance of participating in national municipal forums, ensuring the Rural Municipality of Piney remains informed, connected, and well-positioned to respond to both current and emerging challenges.

Workshop Attendance: Accelerating Impact – Municipal Solutions to Unlock Housing

As part of Day 2 programming, the Committee attended the workshop “*Accelerating Impact: Municipal Solutions to Unlock Housing Now*,” which focused on practical and immediate strategies municipalities can use to increase housing supply.

The session brought together municipal leaders from across Canada to share real-world experiences and actionable tools for addressing housing challenges in communities of varying size and growth patterns. Case studies highlighted both communities experiencing stagnation and those managing rapid growth due to expanding industry.

Notably, the City of Yellowknife presented its experience as a community constrained by limited land availability, demonstrating how geographic and regulatory limitations require creative and adaptive approaches to housing development.

Key Observations and Takeaways

- **Diverse Municipal Challenges:** The session reinforced that no single solution exists for housing development. Communities face widely varying circumstances, including:
 - Population stagnation

- Anticipated growth driven by economic development
 - Physical land constraints limiting expansion
- **Relevance to Rural Municipalities:** Many examples presented came from smaller communities, making the lessons directly applicable to rural municipalities such as the Rural Municipality of Piney.
- **Practical Tools and Strategies:** The workshop provided concrete approaches that municipalities are using to accelerate housing development, including:
 - Streamlining approvals and regulatory processes
 - Leveraging partnerships with developers and other levels of government
 - Utilizing flexible planning approaches to respond to changing needs
- **Learning from Peer Experience:** Hearing directly from mayors, councillors, and municipal staff provided valuable insight into what strategies have succeeded—and what challenges remain—in different regions.
- **Broadened Perspective:** Exposure to a range of municipal contexts helped expand understanding of local housing challenges and highlighted alternative approaches that may not have otherwise been considered.

Value to the Municipality

This workshop was highly relevant to the municipality's current and future planning considerations. It provided:

- Enhanced understanding of housing challenges across different growth scenarios
- Exposure to innovative and flexible approaches that can be adapted locally
- Practical tools to support long-term planning and decision-making
- Insight into how municipalities can position themselves to respond to economic growth opportunities

Overall, the session broadened the municipality's perspective on housing development and provided actionable ideas that can be explored to support sustainable community growth.

Workshop Attendance: Leading Our Way Out of Incivility – Tools and Advice for Effective Local Governance

This session was a key highlight of the conference and provided exceptional value in addressing one of the most pressing challenges facing municipalities today—maintaining effective, respectful, and productive governance.

The workshop featured a highly experienced panel, including George Cuff (municipal governance consultant and former FCM President), Brenda Orchard (President of the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators and CAO), and Senator Dawn Arnold (former Mayor of Moncton). The discussion was candid, practical, and grounded in real-world municipal experience. Panelists shared honest accounts of governance challenges, including difficult outcomes, and provided actionable strategies to address and prevent conflict within Council.

Key Observations and Takeaways

- **Proactive Conflict Prevention:** A central message of the session was that addressing incivility must begin *before* issues arise. Strong governance frameworks and expectations should be established early and reinforced consistently.
- **Critical Role of Training:**
 - **Candidate Training (Pre-Election):** Municipalities should actively promote or support training for prospective candidates to ensure they understand the responsibilities of elected office.
 - **Council Training (Post-Election):** Formal governance and roles/responsibilities training should occur within the first three months following an election to establish expectations and reduce future conflict.
- **Clarity of Roles and Responsibilities:**
 - Council has one employee: the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
 - Council's role is to focus on the "Why" and "What" (vision, policy, and direction)
 - Administration is responsible for the "How" (implementation and operations)
 - Maintaining this separation is essential to effective governance and organizational stability
- **Leadership at All Levels:** Effective governance requires commitment from both elected officials and senior administration. The tone for professionalism and respect must be set and maintained collectively.
- **Real-World Insight:** The panel's willingness to share difficult experiences provided valuable lessons on what happens when governance breaks down—and how those situations can be avoided.

Value to the Municipality

This session delivered immediate and high-impact value to the municipality by providing clear, actionable strategies to strengthen governance and reduce the risk of conflict. Key benefits include:

- Reinforcing the importance of structured onboarding and training for Council members
- Providing tools to support healthy, respectful working relationships between Council and administration
- Clarifying governance roles to improve decision-making efficiency and accountability
- Supporting long-term organizational stability through proactive leadership practices

Strategic Importance

The insights gained from this session are directly applicable and can be implemented at relatively low cost, while offering significant long-term benefit. In particular, the emphasis on early training and role clarity has the potential to:

- Prevent governance challenges before they arise
- Reduce operational inefficiencies caused by conflict
- Enhance Council effectiveness and public confidence

As a result, this workshop represents one of the strongest returns on investment from the conference, with clear opportunities to translate learning into immediate organizational improvements.

Workshop Attendance: Accelerating Impact – Municipal Solutions to Unlock Housing Now

The Committee member attended the workshop “*Accelerating Impact: Municipal Solutions to Unlock Housing Now*,” which focused on practical and immediate strategies to increase housing supply across Canadian communities.

The session highlighted real-world examples from municipalities facing varying housing pressures, including both communities experiencing limited growth and those managing rapid expansion due to economic development. The workshop emphasized actionable tools that can be implemented at the municipal level to accelerate housing availability.

Key Observations and Takeaways

- **Diverse Housing Challenges:** Communities across Canada face different housing realities, including:
 - Limited or stagnant population growth
 - Rapid growth driven by industry
 - Geographic or infrastructure constraints
- **Practical Municipal Tools:** Strategies discussed included:
 - Streamlining approval processes
 - Encouraging partnerships with developers
 - Using flexible planning approaches
- **Peer-Based Learning:** Presentations from municipal leaders provided honest insights into both successful strategies and ongoing challenges.
- **Relevance to Rural Municipalities:** Many examples were applicable to smaller communities, reinforcing that rural municipalities can adopt scalable solutions.

Value to the Municipality

This workshop provided practical insight into how the RM of Piney can approach housing development both proactively and strategically. Key benefits include:

- Improved understanding of housing development options in small municipalities
- Exposure to tools that support future growth planning
- Guidance on aligning municipal planning with economic and population trends

5. Day 3 Overview – FCM Annual Conference and Trade Show (June 6, 2026)

By Day 3 of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual Conference, the pace and energy of the event had significantly increased, with participants fully engaged in both the learning environment and networking opportunities. The day’s programming continued to build on earlier themes, creating a cumulative learning experience that deepened understanding of municipal priorities and best practices.

Having now experienced multiple days of programming, the CAO and the Piney team developed a stronger familiarity with navigating the conference structure, allowing for more effective participation in sessions, discussions, and networking opportunities.

Progression of Learning

A key observation from Day 3 was how the conference content was intentionally structured to build progressively over time. Initial sessions that may have felt introductory early in the conference became more meaningful as additional context and exposure were gained.

This experience can best be described as a building process, where:

- Early sessions provided foundational knowledge
- Subsequent workshops and discussions added depth and context
- Continued exposure to peers and presenters reinforced key themes
- Understanding strengthened incrementally with each day

For a first-time attendee, what initially appeared to be a slower start evolved into a highly effective learning model, with each component contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of municipal issues and opportunities.

Key Themes Reinforced on Day 3

Programming and engagement opportunities on Day 3 continued to emphasize:

- National municipal priorities, including housing, infrastructure, and governance
- Collaboration across municipalities and levels of government
- Knowledge sharing and peer learning as essential tools for municipal success
- Strategic thinking and long-term planning to address evolving challenges

The day also featured high-level discussions and plenary sessions addressing topics such as national sovereignty, security, and the role of local governments, further reinforcing the importance of municipalities within the broader Canadian framework.

Networking and Engagement

With increased familiarity and confidence, Day 3 allowed for more meaningful engagement:

- Stronger participation in discussions and sessions
- More targeted networking with peers and partners
- Increased ability to identify relevant opportunities and applicable ideas

Evening networking events, including receptions focused on rural, northern, and remote municipalities, provided additional opportunities to connect with communities facing similar challenges.

Value to the Municipality

Day 3 represented a turning point in the overall conference experience, where accumulated knowledge began to translate into practical understanding and potential application.

Key benefits include:

- Improved ability to interpret and apply information gathered throughout the conference
- Enhanced confidence in identifying relevant tools, strategies, and partnerships
- Strengthened understanding of how national discussions translate to local impact
- Increased effectiveness in maximizing the value of remaining conference participation

Overall, Day 3 demonstrated the importance of full participation over the duration of the conference. The progressive nature of the programming significantly enhanced the value of attendance, ensuring that insights gained were not isolated, but part of a broader, integrated learning experience.

Workshop Attendance: Assessing Your Community's Climate-Readiness

Continuing to build on knowledge gained in earlier sessions, the Committee attended an additional Green Municipal Fund (GMF) workshop focused on practical tools to support municipal climate adaptation planning.

This session introduced the Community Readiness for Climate Adaptation (CRCA) Tool, a structured and accessible framework designed to help municipalities assess their current level of climate readiness and identify next steps. The tool is intended to support communities at all stages of their adaptation journey, from early awareness to more advanced planning.

Key Observations and Takeaways

- **Practical and Accessible Tool:** The CRCA Tool provides a clear and user-friendly approach for municipalities to evaluate their preparedness for climate impacts and to prioritize actions.
- **Tailored Approach:** The framework recognizes that municipalities are at different stages in their climate adaptation journey and offers scalable activities and recommendations.
- **Action-Oriented Planning:** The tool focuses on actionable steps rather than theory, helping municipalities move from assessment to implementation.
- **Alignment with GMF Funding:** Understanding and utilizing tools such as the CRCA strengthens a municipality's ability to develop projects that align with GMF funding criteria, improving the likelihood of successful grant applications.
- **Building on Previous Learning:** This session complemented earlier GMF programming, reinforcing the importance of integrating climate considerations into municipal planning and operations.

Value to the Municipality

This workshop further enhanced the municipality's capacity to pursue climate adaptation initiatives by providing a structured pathway for planning and implementation. Key benefits include:

- Supporting the development of evidence-based climate strategies
- Improving readiness to access external funding programs, including GMF
- Providing a framework to prioritize projects and allocate resources effectively
- Strengthening long-term community resilience and sustainability planning

Strategic Importance

Continued engagement with GMF programming throughout the conference reflects a proactive approach to identifying funding opportunities and building internal capacity. Tools such as the CRCA position the municipality to take informed, incremental steps toward climate readiness without requiring significant upfront resources.

Study Tour: kihcihkaw askî ("This Place Here is Sacred")

As part of the 2026 Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual Convention, the Committee participated in a guided study tour of **kihcihkaw askî** in Edmonton on June 6, 2026. This tour provided a valuable opportunity to observe a leading example of municipal reconciliation in practice and to gain insights applicable to local governance and partnership development.

kihcihkaw askî, located within Whitemud Park, represents a significant municipal commitment to relationship-building with Indigenous communities. The site is dedicated exclusively to Indigenous ceremonial and cultural use, offering a natural setting for spiritual gatherings, cultural camps, and intergenerational knowledge sharing. It serves as a model for how municipalities can respectfully support Indigenous traditions within urban environments.

The tour began with transportation on an Indigenous-themed bus, which set the tone for cultural awareness and learning. Upon arrival, participants engaged in a guided walk through the site, where they were introduced to key cultural elements, including traditional tipis, sweat lodges, and areas designated for ceremony. The experience also highlighted the presence and importance of traditional plants, reinforcing the connection between land, culture, and community wellbeing.

Key Observations and Takeaways

- **Reconciliation in Action:** The site demonstrates how municipalities can move beyond policy and take tangible steps toward reconciliation by dedicating land and resources to Indigenous-led initiatives.
- **Partnership Opportunities:** kihcihkaw askî illustrates the value of meaningful collaboration with Indigenous partners, including co-development of spaces that meet cultural and spiritual needs.

- **Cultural Awareness:** The tour enhanced understanding of Indigenous traditions, practices, and the importance of creating safe, accessible spaces for cultural expression.
- **Transferable Concepts:** While developed in an urban setting, the principles behind kihcihkaw askî—respect, inclusion, and partnership—are applicable to rural municipalities, including opportunities within the Rural Municipality of Piney.
- **Community Benefits:** Such initiatives support healing, education, and stronger relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous residents.

Value to the Municipality

Attendance at this study tour provided practical ideas and inspiration for how the municipality could explore similar initiatives or partnerships locally. It reinforced the importance of proactive engagement with Indigenous communities and offered a credible example of how municipal leadership can support reconciliation through land use planning and collaborative program development.

6. Day 4 Overview – FCM Annual Conference and Trade Show (June 7, 2026)

Day 4 marked the final day of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual Conference and Trade Show, bringing the event to a close with key governance activities, national-level discussions, and final opportunities to consolidate learning and connections.

The day included FCM’s Annual General Meeting (AGM), leadership updates, and final plenary sessions, reinforcing the role of municipalities in shaping national priorities and strengthening intergovernmental collaboration.

Participation: FCM Annual General Meeting (AGM)

A key component of Day 4 was attendance at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual General Meeting (AGM). Participation in the AGM provided valuable insight into the internal governance, structure, and strategic direction of FCM as a national organization representing municipalities across Canada.

The AGM included formal reports, updates on FCM initiatives, and leadership discussions that were both informative and relevant to ongoing municipal priorities. These presentations offered a clearer understanding of how FCM operates, advocates on behalf of municipalities, and delivers programs that directly benefit local governments.

Key Observations and Takeaways

- **Understanding FCM Governance:** Attendance at the AGM provided firsthand exposure to how FCM is structured, how decisions are made, and how priorities are established at the national level.
- **Insight into National Advocacy Efforts:** Reports and presentations highlighted FCM’s ongoing work in advocating for municipalities on key issues such as housing, infrastructure, and climate resilience.

- **Leadership Engagement:** The AGM provided an opportunity to observe and support municipal leadership at the national level, including support for Kathy Valentino as First Vice-President of FCM, reinforcing regional representation within the organization.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** The session demonstrated FCM's commitment to transparency through open reporting and engagement with its membership.

Value to the Municipality

Attendance at the AGM enhanced the municipality's understanding of how FCM operates as an advocacy body and program provider. This knowledge supports:

- Improved awareness of how municipal interests are represented federally
- Greater understanding of how to engage with FCM programs and initiatives
- Confidence in the governance and accountability of the organization
- Strengthened connection to regional representation within FCM leadership

Strategic Importance

Participation in the AGM ensures that the municipality is not only a recipient of FCM programs and advocacy but is also informed and engaged in the broader direction of the organization. This level of involvement supports more effective alignment with national initiatives and reinforces the value of continued participation in future FCM conferences.

Study Tour: Edmonton City Hall

A key component of Day 4 was participation in a guided study tour of Edmonton City Hall, providing practical insight into municipal governance, civic design, and public engagement. Edmonton City Hall is an architecturally significant building designed to reflect both the municipality's history and its forward-looking vision. The design concept—described during the tour as representing a perspective spanning seven years into the past and seven years into the future—reinforces the importance of continuity and long-term planning in municipal governance.

Tour Highlights

- **Council Chambers:** The chambers are designed to support open and accessible governance, with a layout that encourages public participation and transparency in municipal decision-making.
- **Architectural Design and Symbolism:** The building's design emphasizes openness and inclusivity, aligning physical space with governance principles.
- **Public Art and Cultural Representation:** Art installations throughout the facility reflect community identity and diversity, demonstrating how civic buildings can serve as cultural as well as administrative spaces.
- **Engagement with an Elected Official:** A City of Edmonton Councillor participated in the tour and provided firsthand insight into their role, including Edmonton's approach to public attendance and participation in council meetings.

Key Observations and Takeaways

- **Transparency Through Design:** The structure and layout of City Hall actively support openness and access to municipal government.
- **Public Engagement as a Priority:** Edmonton's model demonstrates the importance of encouraging citizen participation and maintaining accessible governance processes.
- **Alignment with Governance Best Practices:** The discussion reinforced key themes from earlier workshops—particularly the importance of clear roles between Council and administration.
- **Applicability to Rural Municipalities:** While Edmonton operates at a larger scale, many governance principles observed can be adapted to smaller municipalities.

Overall Value of Day 4

Day 4 served as both a conclusion and a consolidation of the conference experience. By this stage, the cumulative learning from previous days had developed into a clear and actionable understanding of municipal governance, funding opportunities, and strategic planning.

Key outcomes include:

- Reinforcement of governance and leadership principles
- Greater understanding of national municipal priorities and federal relationships
- Enhanced ability to translate conference learning into local application
- Final opportunities to strengthen professional networks and partnerships

Overall, the final day effectively tied together the themes of the conference, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, strategic leadership, and continued engagement in national municipal forums.

7. Trade Show and Vendor Engagement

A significant component of the FCM Annual Conference and Trade Show was participation in the national trade show, which brought together a large number of municipal suppliers, service providers, and partner organizations. The 2026 conference featured over 150 exhibitors and a wide range of national sponsors, making it one of the most comprehensive municipal marketplaces in Canada.

The trade show functioned as more than a traditional vendor exhibit—it served as an interactive extension of the conference learning environment, allowing delegates to directly engage with organizations that develop, fund, and support municipal initiatives.

Scope of Participation

The trade show included organizations across a broad range of sectors critical to municipal operations, including:

- Infrastructure development and engineering
- Housing and community planning

- Energy and utilities
- Environmental and climate adaptation solutions
- Technology and data systems
- Emergency services and public safety
- Asset management and operational services

Key Observations and Takeaways

- **Direct Access to Industry Expertise:** The trade show provided a rare opportunity to speak directly with subject matter experts, enabling immediate discussion of municipal challenges and potential solutions without the need for formal procurement processes.
- **Exposure to Innovative Solutions:** Many exhibitors showcased new technologies, tools, and service models that could improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance service delivery within municipalities.
- **Alignment with Municipal Priorities:** Vendor offerings were closely aligned with key issues identified throughout the conference, including:
 - Housing development
 - Infrastructure renewal
 - Climate adaptation and resilience
 - Data-driven decision-making
- **Opportunity for Informed Decision-Making:** The ability to compare multiple providers in one location allows for better-informed decisions when evaluating future purchases, partnerships, or projects.
- **Relationship Building:** Initial conversations with vendors and organizations provide a foundation for future engagement, including:
 - Follow-up discussions and demonstrations
 - Potential pilot projects
 - Support with funding applications or project development

Networking and Engagement Outcomes

The trade show created meaningful opportunities to:

- Establish connections with municipal suppliers and service providers
- Engage with organizations that support federal and provincial funding programs
- Learn directly from vendors about successful projects implemented in other municipalities
- Identify potential partners for future infrastructure, planning, or environmental initiatives

These interactions are particularly valuable for a rural municipality, where access to such a broad range of providers is otherwise limited.

Value to the Municipality

The trade show component of the conference represents a high-value return on investment, with both immediate and long-term benefits:

- Access to a wide range of vetted vendors in a single setting
- Improved awareness of available tools and services applicable to municipal operations
- Ability to identify cost-effective and innovative solutions
- Strengthened capacity to pursue grant-funded projects with experienced partners
- Reduced time and effort in researching and sourcing municipal service providers

Strategic Importance

For the Rural Municipality of Piney, participation in the trade show is particularly valuable due to geographic and market limitations that can restrict exposure to new vendors and ideas.

The conference environment provides:

- Concentrated access to national-level expertise and innovation
- Opportunities to engage with providers who may not otherwise operate locally
- Insights into how other municipalities are solving similar challenges

This exposure supports better long-term planning, more informed procurement decisions, and increased readiness to pursue new initiatives.

8. Trade Show Highlights: Vendors Relevant to the RM of Piney

The FCM Trade Show provided direct exposure to organizations offering practical solutions applicable to rural municipalities. The following vendors were identified as particularly relevant to the RM of Piney based on local priorities such as communication, infrastructure, environmental management, public safety, and governance.

1. Aivia Inc. – Municipal Communication Technology

What they do:

Aivia is an Edmonton-based technology company specializing in custom mobile applications and communication platforms, particularly through their *Communikit* system.

Relevance to Piney:

- Enables municipalities to deliver real-time alerts, notices, and updates directly to residents' phones
- Particularly useful in rural areas where communication gaps can exist due to distance
- Supports engagement with seasonal residents, cottage properties, and dispersed populations

Potential Application:

A Piney-branded app could be used for:

- Emergency alerts (fire, flooding, road closures)
- Council updates and public notices
- Event promotion and community engagement

2. Wildfire Resilience Consortium of Canada – Wildfire Risk Reduction and Community Protection

What They Provide

The Wildfire Resilience Consortium of Canada (WRCC) supports municipalities by providing expertise, planning tools, and strategies to reduce wildfire risk and improve community resilience. Their work focuses on helping local governments assess vulnerability, develop mitigation plans, and implement practical solutions to protect infrastructure and residents.

Their services typically include:

- Wildfire risk assessments and mapping
- Development of community wildfire protection plans (CWPPs)
- Guidance on FireSmart principles and fuel management
- Training, education, and stakeholder engagement
- Support for accessing funding and program resources related to wildfire resilience

Relevance to Piney

For the Rural Municipality of Piney, wildfire preparedness is a critical and increasing concern due to:

- Extensive forested and rural land areas
- Seasonal dry conditions and changing climate patterns
- Limited emergency response capacity and longer response times in rural settings

The WRCC provides tools and expertise that are directly applicable to improving local preparedness, risk reduction, and response planning.

Potential Application

- Development or updating of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)
- Implementation of FireSmart initiatives within:
 - Residential areas
 - Municipal properties
 - Recreational and forested lands
- Identification and prioritization of:
 - High-risk zones
 - Fuel reduction projects (clearing, buffer zones)
- Engagement with provincial and federal programs to:
 - Secure funding for wildfire mitigation
 - Support public education and awareness initiatives

3. Action First Aid – Training & Emergency Preparedness

What they do:

A national provider of first aid, CPR, and AED training, along with equipment and emergency preparedness solutions.

Relevance to Piney:

- Rural municipalities often rely on volunteer responders and community readiness
- Provides hands-on training and AED deployment programs
- Focus on creating “cardiac-safe communities” with accessible defibrillators

Potential Application:

- Training for municipal staff, firefighters, and community volunteers
- Installing AEDs in public buildings and high-traffic areas
- Supporting emergency preparedness in remote locations

4. Fenwood Creative – Interpretation & Tourism Development**What they do:**

A creative design studio specializing in interpretive signage, wayfinding systems, and cultural/nature storytelling experiences.

Relevance to Piney:

- Supports development of tourism assets and natural areas
- Enhances visitor experience at parks, trails, and water bodies
- Helps tell the story of local ecosystems and heritage

Potential Application:

- Interpretive signage around lakes, trails, or conservation areas
- Tourism development at Horseshoe Lake or other attractions
- Wayfinding systems for rural recreation areas

5. Call2Recycle – Battery Recycling Program**What they do:**

Canada's leading battery collection and recycling program, operating nationally with thousands of drop-off locations.

Relevance to Piney:

- Provides a turnkey recycling program for municipalities
- Helps manage hazardous waste and supports environmental compliance
- Operates at no cost to municipalities, funded by producers

Potential Application:

- Establishing a local battery drop-off program
- Reducing environmental risk at waste sites
- Supporting sustainability and public education initiatives

6. FCM – Green Municipal Fund (GMF)**What it is:**

The Green Municipal Fund (GMF) is a national program delivered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities that provides grants, financing, and capacity-building support for municipal environmental projects, particularly in climate adaptation, infrastructure, and sustainability.

Relevance to Piney:

- Specifically designed for municipalities of all sizes, including small rural communities
- Provides access to significant funding opportunities that can offset local costs
- Supports projects related to:
 - Climate adaptation and resilience
 - Energy efficiency

- Water and wastewater improvements
- Sustainable community planning

This aligns directly with challenges and opportunities within the RM of Piney, particularly in areas such as infrastructure planning, environmental management, and long-term sustainability.

Potential Application

- Funding support for water and wastewater system planning or upgrades
- Climate adaptation planning for flooding, drainage, and extreme weather events
- Energy efficiency improvements in municipal buildings or operations
- Development of environmental or sustainability strategies

Key Value

- Access to grant funding that reduces reliance on local taxation
- Provides technical support and tools, not just funding
- Aligns municipal projects with federal priorities, improving funding success rates
- Supports long-term planning capacity in smaller municipalities

Strategic Importance

The Green Municipal Fund represents one of the most important opportunities identified during the conference. Continued engagement with GMF programming positions the RM of Piney to:

- Secure external funding for priority projects
- Strengthen planning and project development capacity
- Improve long-term financial sustainability

7. Petroglyph – Project Analytics & Infrastructure Planning

What they do:

Provides data-driven project analytics, planning tools, and risk management to support infrastructure development.

Relevance to Piney:

- Supports planning for water and wastewater infrastructure development
- Helps municipalities make data-driven decisions on long-term capital projects
- Reduces risk of cost overruns and project delays

Potential Application:

- Long-term planning for Woodridge water and wastewater servicing
- Capital planning and feasibility analysis
- Supporting grant applications with strong data justification

8. Nixiloo – Sustainable Outdoor Infrastructure

What they do:

Provides solar-powered, self-contained ecological toilets designed for public outdoor spaces without servicing infrastructure.

Relevance to Piney:

- Ideal for parks, lakes, trails, and remote recreational areas
- Requires no water, sewer, or electrical connections
- Low maintenance and environmentally friendly

Potential Application:

- Installation at remote sites (e.g., recreation areas, trails, lakes)
- Supporting tourism without major infrastructure investment
- Improving sanitation in underserved locations

9. Build Canada Homes – Federal Housing Initiative**What it is:**

A federal program/agency designed to increase affordable housing supply through funding, land access, and innovative construction methods. [[housing-in....canada.ca](https://housing-in...canada.ca)]

Relevance to Piney:

- Supports rural and northern housing development, including Indigenous housing
- Provides financing and partnerships to accelerate construction
- Encourages modular and cost-effective building approaches

Potential Application:

- Exploring housing opportunities tied to economic expansion
- Supporting development in communities anticipating growth
- Partnering with federal programs for funding support

10. CAMA (Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators)**What they provide:**

A national organization offering toolkits, training, and professional resources for CAO and municipal leadership.

Relevance to Piney:

- Provides practical tools covering:
 - CAO performance evaluation
 - Council orientation
 - Managing incivility
 - Strategic planning and succession

Potential Application:

- Implementing Council onboarding and training programs
- Strengthening governance practices
- Supporting CAO professional development and leadership capacity
- Governance

11. PlunkEV – Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure**What They Provide**

PlunkEV offers turnkey electric vehicle (EV) charging solutions designed to support municipalities in adopting and managing EV infrastructure. Their services include site assessment, installation, system integration, and ongoing management, providing a simplified, end-to-end approach to EV deployment.

Their charging platforms are designed to be scalable, user-friendly, and adaptable, allowing municipalities to implement EV infrastructure in phases based on demand and available resources.

Relevance to Piney

For the Rural Municipality of Piney, PlunkEV represents a forward-looking opportunity aligned with national trends in transportation and sustainability.

- Supports long-term transition toward electric vehicles and reduced emissions
- Provides infrastructure that can enhance tourism and regional accessibility
- Suitable for rural municipalities due to the ability to start small and expand over time
- Aligns with potential federal funding opportunities, including climate and infrastructure programs

Although current demand may be limited, early planning ensures the municipality is prepared for gradual adoption.

Potential Application

- Installation of EV charging stations at:
 - Municipal buildings and offices
 - Community centres and recreational facilities
 - Tourism and destination locations (parks, lakes, trailheads)
- Development of a pilot project to assess demand and usage patterns
- Integration of EV infrastructure planning into:
 - Long-term infrastructure strategies
 - Climate adaptation and sustainability initiatives

12. Canadian Camping and RV Association – Tourism and Recreation Advocacy

What They Provide

The Canadian Camping and RV Association (CCRVA) is a national organization that supports and promotes the camping and recreational vehicle (RV) industry in Canada. They provide advocacy, resources, and industry insight focused on strengthening outdoor tourism, campground development, and recreational travel.

Their work includes:

- Promoting camping and RV tourism across Canada
- Supporting campground operators with standards and best practices
- Providing data and trends related to tourism and outdoor recreation
- Advocating for policies that enhance tourism infrastructure

Relevance to Piney

For the Rural Municipality of Piney, the CCRVA is highly relevant given the municipality's natural assets and potential for tourism and recreation-based economic development.

- Camping and RV travel aligns well with rural and nature-based tourism opportunities
- Supports development and promotion of local campgrounds, lakes, and outdoor spaces
- Provides insight into tourism trends and visitor expectations
- Helps position Piney as a destination for seasonal visitors and travelers

This is particularly important for leveraging existing natural resources without requiring large-scale industrial development.

Potential Application

- Development or enhancement of campground facilities within the municipality
- Promotion of Piney as a destination for:
 - RV travelers
 - Seasonal campers
 - Outdoor recreation enthusiasts
- Use of CCRVA resources to:
 - Improve campground standards and amenities
 - Identify opportunities for tourism growth
 - Align municipal planning with national tourism trends
- Integration of camping and RV tourism into broader economic development and investment strategies

13. Fire Marque – Community Fire Protection Funding

What They Provide

Fire Marque is a specialized organization that supports municipalities by recovering insurance-based fees related to fire protection services. Their model is based on accessing funds from insurance providers when fire departments respond to incidents, helping municipalities recover a portion of their operational costs.

Their services include:

- Administration and recovery of fire protection fees from insurance claims
- Support for municipalities in establishing compliant by-laws and fee structures
- Ongoing management of claims and reporting
- Tools to help municipalities generate additional non-tax revenue

Relevance to Piney

For the Rural Municipality of Piney, Fire Marque presents a practical opportunity to offset the cost of providing fire protection services, particularly in a rural setting where:

- Fire services are often supported by volunteer departments
- Operating costs can be significant relative to a small tax base
- Long response distances increase wear on equipment and demand on personnel

This approach allows the municipality to recover costs without placing additional burden directly on local taxpayers.

Potential Application

- Implementation or review of a fire service by-law enabling cost recovery
- Establishing an agreement with Fire Marque to:
 - Manage claims on behalf of the municipality
 - Recover eligible funds from insurance providers
- Use of recovered funds to support:
 - Equipment upgrades
 - Training and capacity building
 - Maintenance of fire protection infrastructure

14. Conquest Equipment – Municipal Public Works and Utility Equipment

What They Provide

Conquest Equipment is a supplier of specialized municipal equipment and machinery, supporting public works operations such as road maintenance, drainage management, vegetation control, and infrastructure servicing.

Their offerings typically include:

- Maintenance equipment for roads, ditches, and rights-of-way
- Machinery for brushing, mowing, and vegetation control
- Equipment solutions for drainage and culvert maintenance
- Attachments and tools designed for multi-purpose municipal use

Their equipment is designed with durability in mind, suited to the demands of rural and remote environments.

Relevance to Piney

For the Rural Municipality of Piney, Conquest Equipment is directly applicable to core municipal operations, particularly given the size and rural nature of the municipality.

- Supports efficient management of large rural road networks
- Improves capacity for ditch maintenance and drainage control
- Addresses vegetation management along roadways and municipal lands
- Provides tools that can enhance productivity with limited staff resources

Given the geographic size and limited workforce typical of smaller municipalities, equipment that improves efficiency and versatility is especially valuable.

Potential Application

- Acquisition of equipment for:
 - Roadside mowing and brushing programs
 - Drainage and ditch maintenance projects
 - Seasonal maintenance activities (spring runoff, summer vegetation control)
- Evaluation of multi-purpose equipment to:
 - Reduce reliance on multiple specialized machines
 - Increase operational efficiency with existing staff
- Integration into long-term asset management and capital planning strategies

Overall Trade Show Value

The vendors identified above demonstrate the breadth of practical solutions available to rural municipalities, including:

- Low-cost, scalable tools suited to small populations
- Solutions that reduce reliance on large infrastructure investments
- Opportunities to leverage external expertise, funding, and partnerships

For the RM of Piney, the trade show provided direct exposure to actionable solutions in:

- Communication
- Environmental management
- Infrastructure planning
- Public safety

9. National Networking and Relationship Building

A key and often understated benefit of attending the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual Conference is the opportunity to connect directly with municipal leaders, administrators, and community representatives from across Canada. These conversations provide real-world context, shared experiences, and practical insight that cannot be replicated through formal sessions alone.

Throughout the conference, meaningful discussions were held with representatives from a wide range of municipalities—urban, rural, northern, and coastal—each facing unique challenges and opportunities.

Cross-Canada Perspectives

- **Salmo, British Columbia (Mayor Diana Lockwood):**
Discussions focused on the realities of governing a small rural municipality and the regulatory environment imposed by the Province of British Columbia. This provided useful comparison to Manitoba's framework and highlighted how different provincial systems shape municipal operations.
- **Rocky Mountain House, Alberta (Denise Boniface):**
Conversations provided insight into managing:
 - The impacts of past Council decisions
 - Social challenges, including addictions within the community
 - Balancing growth with maintaining community identity
 - Long-term visioning for sustainable development
- **Oakville, Ontario (Population ~240,000):**
Engagement with a large urban municipality offered perspective on challenges at the opposite end of the spectrum, including:
 - Rapid population growth
 - Limited land for expansion
 - Pressures related to affordable housing for young families
- **Municipality from Quebec:**
A discussion highlighted the significant cost of winter operations, noting snow clearing expenses of approximately \$17,000 per kilometre, underscoring regional cost variations and infrastructure pressures across the country.
- **Jasper, Alberta:**
Conversations focused on emergency preparedness and recovery, providing valuable insight into community resilience following crisis events.
- **Just to name a few!**

Broader National Discussions

In addition to specific municipal conversations, the conference provided a platform for broader dialogue on national issues affecting communities across Canada:

- **Energy and Infrastructure:**
 - Rising energy costs
 - Risks associated with transporting oil via rail

- Natural Resource Industries:
 - Challenges within the forestry and timber sectors (particularly from British Columbia representatives)
- Housing:
 - Affordability pressures in urban centres
 - Critical housing shortages in northern and remote communities
- Cost of Living in Remote Regions:
 - High cost of food and services in northern communities
- National Unity and Collaboration:
 - Numerous discussions with Alberta representatives centered on the importance of a strong, unified Canada, particularly in the context of economic and regional differences

Value to the Municipality

These conversations significantly broadened understanding of how municipal challenges vary across Canada while also revealing common themes that connect communities regardless of size or location.

Key benefits include:

- Enhanced perspective on shared municipal challenges
- Exposure to different governance approaches and provincial frameworks
- Improved understanding of emerging national issues
- Opportunities to exchange ideas and practical solutions

Equally important, the Committee was able to actively promote the Rural Municipality of Piney, highlighting it as:

- A desirable place to live, work, and invest
- A municipality with opportunity for growth and development
- A community committed to strong governance and forward planning

Strategic Importance

The ability to both learn from and contribute to national conversations is a critical outcome of attending FCM. These connections:

- Strengthen the municipality's position within the broader Canadian municipal network
- Provide ongoing opportunities for collaboration and information sharing
- Ensure the RM of Piney remains informed, engaged, and represented at the national level

10. Key Outcomes and Value to the Municipality

Attendance at the 2026 Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual Conference and Trade Show resulted in several key outcomes that provide both immediate and long-term value to the Rural Municipality of Piney.

1. Enhanced Knowledge and Capacity

The conference delivered practical, experience-based learning across a range of critical municipal functions, including governance, infrastructure planning, housing development, and climate adaptation. The progressive structure of the conference allowed for a deeper understanding of complex issues, with each session building upon the last.

This enhanced knowledge base supports:

- More informed decision-making by administration and Council
- Improved long-term planning and risk management
- Greater awareness of best practices and emerging trends

2. Increased Awareness of Funding Opportunities

Significant emphasis was placed on federal and partner-funded programs, particularly the Green Municipal Fund (GMF). Attendance strengthened the municipality's awareness of available grants, financing tools, and technical supports.

This positions the RM of Piney to:

- Pursue external funding opportunities for infrastructure and environmental projects
- Reduce financial pressure on local taxpayers
- Align municipal initiatives with national funding priorities

3. Strengthened Governance Practices

Workshops focused on governance, roles and responsibilities, and conflict management provided actionable tools that can be applied immediately. Key lessons included the importance of:

- Clear separation of Council and administrative roles
- Structured onboarding and training for elected officials
- Proactive approaches to preventing governance challenges

These insights contribute to stronger organizational stability and more effective Council-administration relationships.

4. Exposure to Practical Solutions and Innovation

The trade show provided direct access to vendors offering solutions tailored to municipalities, including communication platforms, environmental programs, emergency preparedness tools, and infrastructure planning services.

This exposure enables:

- Identification of cost-effective solutions
- Improved procurement decision-making
- Access to expertise that may not be readily available locally

5. Expanded Professional Network

Engagement with municipal leaders from across Canada created valuable connections and opportunities for ongoing collaboration. These relationships provide access to shared knowledge and experiences that can support future municipal initiatives.

6. Broader National Perspective

Discussions with municipalities of varying sizes and regions enhanced understanding of both shared challenges and unique circumstances across Canada. This broader perspective strengthens the municipality's ability to:

- Adapt proven approaches from other regions
- Better understand national trends and policy direction
- Position itself within the broader municipal landscape

11. Return on Investment and Strategic Benefits

Attendance at the FCM Annual Conference represents a strong and measurable return on investment for the Rural Municipality of Piney. While the financial cost of attendance is modest, the potential benefits—both immediate and long-term—are substantial.

1. Access to Funding Opportunities

One of the most significant returns comes through improved access to external funding programs, particularly the Green Municipal Fund. Even a single successful grant application has the potential to:

- Far exceed the cost of conference attendance
- Support major municipal projects without increasing local taxation
- Enable initiatives that may not otherwise be financially feasible

2. Improved Decision-Making and Risk Reduction

Exposure to best practices, peer experiences, and expert guidance enhances the quality of municipal decision-making. This leads to:

- More effective planning and project implementation
- Reduced risk of costly errors or inefficiencies
- Better alignment of municipal actions with proven strategies

3. Cost Savings Through Innovation and Efficiency

Identification of new tools, technologies, and service providers supports more efficient municipal operations. This includes:

- Streamlined communication with residents
- Improved infrastructure planning and asset management
- Adoption of solutions that reduce long-term operating costs

4. Strengthened Governance and Organizational Stability

The governance-focused sessions provided clear, actionable strategies to improve Council effectiveness and reduce the risk of conflict. Strong governance directly contributes to:

- More efficient use of staff and Council time
- Reduced organizational disruption
- Increased public confidence in municipal leadership

5. Strategic Positioning for Growth and Development

Workshops and networking opportunities provided practical insight into housing, economic development, and investment attraction. This strengthens the municipality's ability to:

- Respond to future growth opportunities
- Attract investment and development
- Support long-term sustainability and community viability

6. Enhanced Visibility and Representation

Participation in a national forum allows the RM of Piney to actively represent its interests while promoting itself as a desirable community. This includes:

- Showcasing the municipality as a place to live, work, and invest
- Building relationships with potential partners and stakeholders
- Ensuring rural perspectives are included in national discussions

7. Long-Term Strategic Benefit

The value of FCM attendance is cumulative. Continued participation strengthens relationships, builds institutional knowledge, and improves the municipality's ability to take advantage of opportunities over time.

12. Conclusion

Attendance at the 2026 Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Annual Conference and Trade Show has provided significant value to the Rural Municipality of Piney, both in terms of immediate knowledge gained and long-term opportunities identified. The experience offered practical tools, exposure to innovative solutions, meaningful networking, and a deeper understanding of the national municipal landscape.

On behalf of the administration, sincere appreciation is extended to Council for its support in enabling attendance at this conference. The investment made by Council directly contributed to enhancing the municipality's capacity in key areas such as governance, funding access, infrastructure planning, and community development. The knowledge and relationships developed through this experience will continue to provide benefit well beyond the duration of the event.

The conference clearly demonstrated that municipalities across Canada—regardless of size—are facing many of the same challenges, including housing pressures, infrastructure demands, climate impacts, and the need for effective governance. At the same time, it highlighted that solutions are available through collaboration, innovation, and engagement with national partners. Participation in FCM ensures that the RM of Piney remains connected to these conversations and positioned to take advantage of emerging opportunities.

Importantly, the value of attending FCM is cumulative. As demonstrated throughout the conference, the full benefit is realized through continued participation, where knowledge

builds year over year, relationships are strengthened, and familiarity with programs and partners leads to more successful outcomes. Future attendance will further enhance the municipality's ability to:

- Secure external funding through programs such as the Green Municipal Fund
- Implement best practices in governance and administration
- Identify cost-effective solutions and service providers
- Strengthen partnerships with municipalities, organizations, and government agencies
- Represent the interests and opportunities of the RM of Piney on a national stage

In a rapidly evolving municipal environment, staying informed, connected, and proactive is essential. Continued support for attendance at future FCM conferences will ensure that the Rural Municipality of Piney remains well-positioned to respond to challenges, seize opportunities, and deliver effective and sustainable services to its residents.

Respectfully submitted,
FCM Attendance Committee