

*POWER LINES**Representation - Engagement - Advocacy*

VOLUME 12, ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2018

*Innovative & Dynamic Rural Electrification Associations as part of a Vibrant Rural Alberta Community***AFREA SUMMER TECHNICAL SESSION****AFREA  
SUMMER  
SESSION** 

Since last year's session in August, several matters have come to pass and transitioned from that day's presentations. Some topics discussed and/or mentioned are ongoing, as is the case with processes involving change through the government ministries or proceedings brought before the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC). All these processes take time.

**What has transpired since last year's session?**

The Intermingled study is moving forward. Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) brought forward sweeping changes effective June 1st, 2018. The RRO rate setting impact on REAs was dealt with through workshops and conference calls to clarify the process and assist REAs. Several hearings have concluded although we await decisions from the AUC. We worked

with Municipal Affairs to streamline tax assessment and recording required for non-agricultural services.

**What will be discussed at this year's session?**

The July 18th, 2018 Agenda will cover those topics still requiring details to ensure REAs all have grasped the necessary procedures to move forward with compliance. Linear Tax is one of those ongoing processes to be discussed and David Imrie from Municipal Affairs is on the agenda. Another area of concern is the implementation of the Capacity Market and what implications there are for REAs through this change. Our consultants at Bema Enterprises will discuss the Capacity Market. Alberta Energy will also talk about it as well as the topic of Alternative Energy. Our legal, lobbying, and communication consultants will provide reporting on legislation and REA sustainability—all pertain to the success of REAs in Alberta. Several proceedings and initiatives have challenged that livelihood, but our ongoing efforts to advocate for the REA way of life drives our representation and stakeholder partnerships.

Summer sessions were introduced in 2016 as a way to incorporate workshops and communication updates due to the increasing number of government and industry initiatives and projects. It is a valuable way to keep our members informed midway between the AGM and Fall District Meetings.

**Quick Notes**

- *Be sure to register for the AFREA Summer Technical Session—we need to confirm numbers with the hotel for food / beverages. Please RSVP to Jan at our office as soon as possible.*
- *New Directors? REA Secretaries please send new contact information to the AFREA office c/o janeth@afrea.ab.ca—we will up date our lists.*

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*Fall—September 2018  
Preparing for Fall District Meetings...*



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## Government / Industry Initiatives—Updates

When available, updates have been provided to our members through direct email communication memos and via the AFREA E-News. Further details will continue to be provided as received.

### LINEAR TAX

The AFREA is working closely with the Assessment Services Branch of Municipal Affairs to develop tools to assist REAs in calculating amounts owing on each site within the County / MD. Tax assessment will be made on: commercial and/or residential services, single or multi-lot, within rural sub-divisions not affiliated with a farm or agricultural operations. Conference calls have provided necessary direction for affected members. This topic will be discussed further in the Summer Technical Session workshop on Wednesday, July 18th.

### INTERMINGLED SYSTEM STUDY

Alignment with the Department of Agriculture & Forestry initiatives strengthens the AFREA connection to the Ministry and provides opportunity for valuable advocacy. By working with Rural Utilities whenever possible we assist them, much like the administration of the Rural Electric Grant Program—a program that might not have continued had we not stepped in. Our support is appreciated and rewarded through invitation to participate further and opportunity to provide valuable input on behalf of our members. Submission to the Intermingled System Study will allow those making the decisions information necessary to formulate policy. We want to remind you that your input means there will be a broader and more complete picture of REAs in Alberta. As with any stakeholder consultation, your option to provide input enhances the big picture; similarly, your choice to not participate limits the data available for comparison. This project is scheduled for completion by September 28th, 2018.

### OPTION M CREDITS AND FRANCHISE BOUNDARY PROCEEDINGS

We await AUC decisions and will update reporting through AFREA communication methods upon receipt.

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## Occupational Health & Safety Changes: Alberta

Last year, the government of Alberta revamped the **Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Act** and made significant changes to the **Workers' Compensation Act** under the **Act to Protect the Health & Well-being of Working Albertans** (Bill 30). Some of these changes came into effect on January 1, 2018. The changes found in Bill 30 that came into force June 1, 2018, include:

- **Incorporating three basic rights of workers in the Occupational Health & Safety Act:**
  - \* **The right to refuse unsafe work** protects workers from any form of reprisal for exercising this right.
  - \* **The right to know** ensures workers are informed about potential hazards and have access to basic health & safety information in the workplace.
  - \* **The right to participate** ensures workers are involved in health & safety discussions, including committees.
- **Requiring a health & safety program:** Employers with 20 or more workers must have a written health & safety program that involves having a health & safety policy statement and procedures. The program must have 10 mandated elements, be reviewed every three years, or more often if circumstances change that create or could create a hazard to workers. Employers with less than 20 employees must involve workers in hazard assessment and control.
- **Clarifying the duties of workplace parties:** Definitions, roles and responsibilities of workplace parties for health & safety are clarified, including the obligations of employers, supervisors, workers, owners, prime contractors, contractors, suppliers, service providers, self-employed persons and temporary staffing agencies.
- **Mandating the right to participate:** The changes ensure workers are involved in health & safety discussions, including participation in health & safety committees.

### Meeting your duty of care: Importance of a health & safety program, policies & procedures

Employers have legal obligations to ensure a safe & healthy workplace for their employees in the first instance—and also for anyone else who may visit the workplace, such as customers, contractors, and members of the public. Employers have a duty of care to all employees to ensure they are both mentally and physically safe at work and that their health is not adversely affected by anything or anyone in the working environment. To meet this duty of care, an employer must implement a health & safety program that includes policies, procedures, a hazard assessment to identify possible workplace hazards, and corrective actions to prevent accidents or injuries arising from these hazards before an event occurs.

#### The 10 required elements are:

1. A health & safety policy that states the policy for the protection and maintenance of the health & safety of workers at the worksite.
2. Identification of existing and potential hazards to workers at the worksite, including harassment, violence, physical, biological, chemical or radiological hazards and measures that will be taken to eliminate, reduce or control those hazards.
3. An emergency response plan.
4. A statement of the responsibilities of the employer, supervisors, and workers at the worksite.
5. A schedule and procedures for regular inspection of the worksite.
6. Procedures to be followed to protect health & safety when another employer or self-employed person is involved in work at the worksite, including criteria for evaluating and selecting and for regularly monitoring those employers and self-employed persons.
7. Worker and supervisor health & safety orientation and training.
8. Procedures for investigating incidents, injuries and refusals to work.
9. Procedures for worker participation in worksite health and safety, including inspections and the investigation of incidents, injuries and refusals to work.
10. Procedures for reviewing and revising the health & safety program if circumstances at a worksite change in a way that creates or could create a hazard to workers.

**The AFREA is working with our safety consultant to review and revise our Business Management System and those on the program will receive revisions with the relevant changes.**



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## MEMBER—CHALLENGE!

**How many REAs can we get on our sponsor posters?** Check out our web site for this year's 12th Annual Federation Golf Classic information. You can download information, a registration form, and a sponsorship form. As little as \$100 can show your REA pride in support of MS. Donations to our charity only come from what we raise for golf day and we'd love to see our members participate in whatever way possible. Last year we had 5 REAs contribute through prize donations and other sponsorships. **Can we get more this year?** We challenge our members to get together with their district or as an individual REA and put your best contribution forward. As always, we appreciate your support to this very worthy cause. Thank you!

Contact Janeth at the Federation Office for more information or to confirm your donation: [janeth@afrea.ab.ca](mailto:janeth@afrea.ab.ca)

### *Did You Know...*

- The Alberta Federation of REAs and the Federation of Alberta Gas Co-ops were awarded the Special Service Award in 2011 for the Alberta Division from the MS Society of Canada.
- Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) estimates that **over 77,000 Canadian adults are living with MS.** This equates to **2.6 individuals per 1,000 adult population** or an estimated **1 in every 385 Canadians.**

#### **Other estimates include:**

- ◆ Women are three times more likely to be diagnosed with MS than men.
- ◆ On average, 11 Canadians are diagnosed with MS every day.
- ◆ Sixty percent of adults diagnosed with MS are between the ages of 20 and 49 years old.

- [MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS: THE FACTS YOU NEED TO KNOW](#)—5TH EDITION, DR. PAUL O'CONNOR

If you have any announcements or stories you would like to share,  
please send them to [janeth@afrea.ab.ca](mailto:janeth@afrea.ab.ca)