Thank you for joining us today for the second annual LAS / MFOA asset management symposium.

Last year, 160 people joined us for this event, but this year we are pleased to welcome more than 210 event attendees. This growth shows the need for knowledge related to municipal asset management planning, and we are committed to delivering it.

To further expand the reach of this symposium, and to communicate the Asset Management message to more municipal staff and elected officials, we have made this event available via ‘live streaming’ for those unable to attend in person.

I would like to welcome the 15 municipalities that are joining us today via live streaming, and especially those participating from outside of Ontario.

Look around… by being here today you all recognize the importance of asset management and want to take your plans to the next level. You are also willing to learn together about how to make asset management part of your ‘business as usual’ practices.

Today’s topic is a timely one, and one for which municipalities are seeking guidance. We can help.

This year’s symposium theme: “Asset Management Plan - So Now What?” will offer ideas and commentary related to Asset Condition, Service Levels, Financing, and the need for continual review and improvement. We hope to help you get to the next step in your asset management journey.

We all enjoyed yesterday's concurrent workshop sessions, and learned much about some key principles of asset management, from Alain Gonthier, Don May, and Calvin Barrett. Today's proceedings will build upon those core learnings.

Municipalities have an obligation to residents to manage their services in the best way possible to maximize infrastructures' contribution to the economy and local quality of life.

This mandate is not made easier by limited capital funding, significant infrastructure needs, and ratepayer expectations, all of which put pressure on the municipal tax dollar. Municipalities must set clear service level expectations and prioritize infrastructure vestments to help meet the expectations and needs of their community.
With established service delivery levels, municipalities should be developing comprehensive asset management plans that include a financial plan outlining key priorities and funding sources.

It is a tough assignment to develop a plan, and keep it current, while also working to embed ongoing asset management within your organization, but the municipal sector can do it... and we must.

We need to keep developing the culture of ongoing asset management until it is just part of what we do as a sector. Our residents expect, and deserve, that rigor in our work.

Today we will offer some ideas and strategies to make good plans and processes a reality for your organization.

AMO has long understood that municipalities vary greatly in size and responsibilities, and that all have varying degrees of expertise related to asset management. Regardless, all municipalities have to complete asset management plans, and review and update them regularly to allow for the development of long-term financial plans that can guide future decision-making.

We are getting there! Nearly all municipalities have completed their asset management plans, now we just need to work to make them better. There is a lot of valuable information in the completed plans. They are however, a line in the sand, and need to be continually reviewed if they are to guide our future decision-making. There is more work to come, and we have an imperative to do it correctly for the future financial health of our communities.

For staff attending today, you want to leave the municipality in a better state than when you joined the organization, regardless of your role.

For elected officials, it is important that you view asset management as an exercise that goes beyond your term of council. It is imperative that you make good decisions now, to ensure the fiscal health of your community 20+ years into the future.

In this vein, we look forward to today’s presentations, which will address:

- The state of municipal finance and asset management
- Service Delivery Based Asset Management
- The Federal Gas Tax Fund and Asset Management
- Provincial policy and requirements for Asset Management
- Why the financial stuff matters
- Debt and reserves in Ontario
- Risk-based decision making
- Case studies from two Canadian municipalities:
Throughout the day we look forward to your comments, and questions. Your input is important to AMO as our views on asset management are ongoing and evolving – you are helping us frame our advocacy and refine future training.

In closing, let’s get these plans done and do them right. Together we can keep improving on asset management, which will support our requests for more, and better-designed funding programs, and support you in meeting your community’s needs.

Regardless of where your organization is in the asset management process, you will take something away from these proceedings to help reinforce how essential an inclusive and comprehensive asset management process is. You will leave with ideas, new avenues to explore, and a re-kindled interest in your own journey.

Thanks again for joining us today.