



2020 Chair AGM Speech

I was privileged to be selected as Chair of the Ste. Anne Natural Gas Co-op a year ago. And it has been quite a year. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted every aspect of how we live and work and has forced us to be creative and flexible with our staff and members. In the current situation, it is vital to stay connected with our Members and what are they experiencing.

As part of our COVID response, in March we closed our office to the public. We also implemented mandatory PPE for staff, and limited our work to emergency services only. By doing so, we were able to live up to our social responsibility in preventing the virus from spreading further while ensuring business continuity to our Members. Even when the office reopened, we have taken steps to ensure physical distancing is in place and are limiting entry to one customer at a time.

We also participated in the provincial government's deferral program which permitted members who registered to defer payments during the height of the pandemic. Several members took advantage of this opportunity and the staff is currently working with them to establish repayment schedules for the amounts deferred.

Despite the ongoing changes to operations resulting from COVID-19, I am happy to report that SANG has still been able to meet all of its operational requirements as we adapt to this "new normal". In fact, we have just completed our COR safety audit with 93% and our O & M audit undertaken by the Rural Utilities branch of the provincial government where we received outstanding results.

We are in the third year of our capital replacement plan and are working on the line replacement in the Summer Village of Yellowstone, using all local contractors. SANG will continue investing in our system to ensure our Members have a safe and reliable energy source. And by using local contractors we are able to inject some momentum into the local economy.

As we were preparing for this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM), it was necessary to find a balance between the requirements of the Rural Gas Act, under which we operate, and maintaining the health and safety of our members. We investigated holding a virtual AGM, however the Act specifies that only in-person voting is allowed. The provincial government has also allowed timelines to be extended, so the AGM could have been delayed. In reviewing this option, we were not certain whether conditions would be materially better within the two-month extension, so the decision was to hold the AGM on its normal timeline. In recognition of the fact many members may decide to not participate in person, we are making arrangements to broadcast our AGM on Facebook Live. We hope this will allow all our members to feel part of the process, even if they do not feel comfortable attending the meeting. And, for the first time in many years, we are not able to provide a meal for those attending. We hope to be able to make up for it next year!

At this meeting we will be bringing to the floor changes to our supplemental bylaws. The changes, which followed a review by our legal counsel, are intended to ensure the bylaws are consistent with current legal requirements and governance standards. The most significant change included in the revised bylaws is the removal of the requirement for Directors to step aside following two terms on the Board of Directors. This change is recommended to ensure the composition of the Board includes members with appropriate experience to guide the organization through the issues ahead.

As I conclude my year as Chair, I would like to thank my fellow Directors for their contributions during the year and to all our employees who have expertly guided the organization through the unique conditions brought on by the pandemic. SANG is definitely in good hands!

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Martin
Chair