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Meet the New Public Servants Committee



Back: Sarah McFatridge, Lindsay Manz, Adam Clarke, Cristina Cernucan, James Runge
Front: Brent Wellsch, Karina Crooks
Absent: Stephen Nichols, Samuel Alexander, Ashley Casovan

Sarah McFatridge
Alberta Advanced Education
and Technology

Lindsay Manz
Alberta Advanced Education
and Technology

Adam Clarke
Correctional Service Canada

Cristina Cernucan
Alberta Municipal Affairs

James Runge
Public Works and Government
Services Canada

Brent Wellsch
Alberta Advanced Education
and Technology

Karina Crooks
Alberta Human Services

Stephen Nichols
Aboriginal Affairs and
Northern Development Canada

Samuel Alexander
Alberta Housing and Urban Affairs

Ashley Casovan
City of Edmonton

ipac new public servants committee

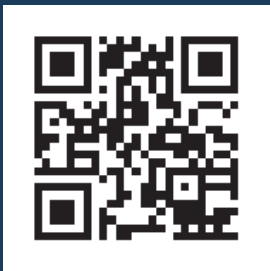
The Edmonton regional group has a committee specifically dedicated to providing networking and learning opportunities to new public servants. The new public servants with an unique perspective and energy to the regional organization, which benefits all members.

NPS Events

The new public servants group holds events throughout the year and publishes a newsletter on a regular basis. If you are a new public service professional with five or less years of public sector experience, our new public servants group wants to hear from you!

Join IPAC

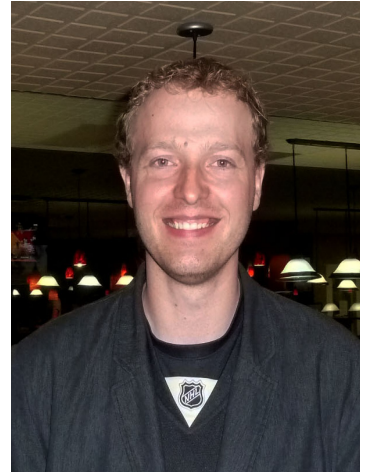
To learn more about how to join our organization as a new public servant, email James.Runge@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca or visit us on our website at www.ipac.ca/edmonton.



message from the NPS chair james runge

On behalf of the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC) and the IPAC Edmonton Region New Public Servants (NPS) committee, I am honored to welcome you to the 2011-2012 program season.

I would like to thank each of you for taking the time to read the first issue of *Fresh Focus* -- the IPAC Edmonton Region newsletter for all aspiring, new and senior public servants. *Fresh Focus* has a rich history of providing information on past events in the Edmonton Region and generating excitement for upcoming events. This publication is the result of a strong and dedicated group of volunteers on the NPS committee and I cannot thank them enough for the dedication, passion and skills they bring to the job! As the 2011-2012 NPS Chair, I take great pride in having the opportunity to continue the tradition of extending welcome for the upcoming season.



For those who may be new to the public service, I would like to encourage you to become involved. There is no better way to network, both on the professional and personal level, than by becoming more engaged in the vast opportunities around you. IPAC provides an opportunity for all levels of government and the world of academia to unite and collaborate together.

When I began my career in the public service, I found the biggest challenge was finding individuals that were in the same boat. You find yourself riding the waves of unfamiliarity, not knowing many people, new to the operations of government, and unsure of how to find your niche. The IPAC NPS committee is a great opportunity to break down some of those walls and truly help develop your professional and personal career within the public service. The NPS committee is also fortunate to have a great relationship with other young professionals in the Edmonton Region, including oXYgen (Government of Canada-Alberta Region) and Next Gen (City of Edmonton).

The 2011-2012 NPS program of events is a great opportunity to meet, greet, network and, of course, have some fun. If you or someone you know would be interested in joining the NPS committee, or you have a *Fresh Focus* for the future, please feel free to contact me. And check out the program of events and more information about IPAC on our website (ipac.ca/Edmonton).

On behalf of the NPS committee, we look forward to meeting you at the upcoming Holiday Social.

Have a joyous holiday season!

James Runge
James.Runge@pwgsc-tpsgc.gc.ca

Recap of Past IPAC Edmonton Region Events



Edmonton Regional Program Launch

On September 15, IPAC members were invited to the kick-off of the 2011-2012 program at the new Strathcona County Community Centre. Participants heard about IPAC international opportunities that link Canadian public servants with counterparts from around the world. Kathleen Gora explained that the project currently underway between the Government of Alberta and Ghana related to enhancing internal audits. Representatives from Ghana were also on hand to share their experiences.

Kick-off NPS Networking Social

The NPS Committee hosted a networking social on September 28th at the Elephant & Castle to kick off its 2011-12 year. This free event was a great opportunity to meet new professionals across all orders of government (federal, provincial and municipal) and academia, and to learn about the exciting opportunities that IPAC has to offer. Members of the NPS Committee and the Edmonton Regional Group spoke about the value of IPAC and the networking opportunities it can provide. Prizes, refreshments and a great turnout made this event a great success.

Panel on Politics and Administration

Bright and early on November 3rd, the IPAC Edmonton Regional Group hosted a panel discussion entitled Politics and Administration. Nearly 80 IPAC members and guests were in attendance at the Delta Edmonton Centre to share breakfast and explore the relationship between politicians and the bureaucracy. At the centre was how we, as public administrators, can be independent of, yet subservient to, politicians, while remaining politically neutral but also politically sensitive. Answering the tough questions were three individuals with first-hand experience at the highest levels: Ron Hicks, former Deputy Minister of Executive Council with the Government of Alberta; Robyn Singleton, current Chief Administrative Officer with Strathcona County; and George Cuff, former Mayor of Spruce Grove and a well-known consultant for municipalities. Topics ranged from what goes into a Deputy Minister's selection, what municipalities face when Ministers and senior public servants change, advice for those aspiring to the senior ranks, and the ideal relationship between public servants and politicians.

upcoming events

Holiday Networking Social

Our annual holiday get-together for all IPAC Edmonton regional members.

December 19, 2011
5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Metro Billiards Club
(10250 106 Street)

Public Policy Workshop

Join IPAC members and guests from all orders of government to discuss public policy and hear from colleagues on their recent projects.

January 11, 2012
9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Lister Centre
University of Alberta

Brown Bag Session

What are new public servants thinking about these days? Come spend a lunch hour and find out.

Time and Date TBD

What public servants need to know.

We asked 4 senior public servants about the challenges and opportunities for public servants during an economic downturn, shrinking budgets and hiring freezes.



In times of economic uncertainty the biggest challenge is not to over-react to the situation or to change your relationship with your employees. I find that isolation from the issue is the most difficult thing for employees to handle and, therefore, thoughtful yet realistic communication is key.

You also need to take account of what your functional responsibilities are and to determine what, if any items, can be shelved or reprofiled. Every business cycle (whether in a period of decline or growth) I ask my direct reports to reflect on the way we do business to ensure we are keeping up with the times and the environment we are working in. As leaders, we should be ready to adjust to change as opposed to having change thrust upon us.

I would like to emphasize that employee development should not be compromised during this period as we need to look at the long-term needs of our organization and if we fail to support our staff through these periods of economic uncertainty, they may be less enthused with staying with our organization when things turn around and they have more employment options open to them.

Michael Merritt
Assistant Deputy Minister
Alberta Municipal Affairs

For those in the public service, an economic downturn can become a time of challenge and despair but should also be seen as an opportunity for the future. If I could offer words of wisdom for those in the public service, especially new public servants, it would be: *please have patience!*

An economic downturn can often yield speculation and uncertainty. People begin to feel the shift in the economy and the resulting change arising from this downturn can be personal. I would like to remind all public servants to try and not take these changes personal. Yes, public servants can be affected by the economic downturn; however, public servants must also realize they are autonomous from the reaction. The shift in the economy will cause the public service to constrict and, as a result, public servants will begin to see the changes in job roles and an increased responsibility.

This shift can be seen as a challenge but doesn't need to. A shift in work culture can become one of opportunity. Public servants can view the economic downturn as an opportunity to be in charge of your career and find your niche. An increase in responsibilities and account-

ability can help determine if the career path you are on is the right path for you. Public servants can become engaged in their own careers through reading, listening and participating in decision making processes. You have an opportunity to become more informed through asking questions, watching what is happen-

“If I could offer words of wisdom for those in the public service, especially new public servants, it would be: please have patience!”

ing both home and abroad and show the tenacity and understanding it takes to move forward as a success.

I would recommend new public servants take the opportunity to increase their networking and seek out mentoring and coaching opportunities through their departments or through organizations like IPAC. The outreach and networking opportunities can prove to be your most successful career decisions and, in an economic downturn, those decisions can help convert a potential problem into a long-term opportunity.

Treasure Ducharme
Regional Director, Acquisitions & Compensation,
Public Works and Government Services Canada

I have been working with the public education systems, both in Alberta and abroad for over 25 years. Since 1986, I would say that my most memorable and rewarding career opportunities occurred during economic downturns or periods of budget cutbacks. Budget pressures often facilitate large scale internal reviews of existing processes and operations, providing leadership with options to revisit the core purpose and priorities of the enterprise. Some very important skills and knowledge can be acquired by participating in these reviews and the cross-functional teams that are often established to tackle them. These reviews provide opportunities to engage in “systems thinking” and expose team participants to key

“Good fortune in your career is really, by definition, just what naturally occurs when hard work and opportunity collide.”

facets of the operation with the added benefit of creating new and beneficial relationships with colleagues from across the organization. Actively engaging in processes that identify efficiencies, or create new revenue sources is highly rewarding and can provide outstanding material for those behavior descriptive interview questions you may face as you pursue a promotion down the road. The challenge during an economic downturn is to remain positive and look for opportunities to put your creativity and imagination to good use both for you and your employer. A very wise colleague once told me that “good fortune in your career is really, by definition, just what naturally occurs when hard work and opportunity collide”.

Dan Rizzoli
Executive Director,
Advanced Education and Technology

Managing reduced budgets and hiring restraints/freezes during an economic downturn provides the public service with opportunities to look at how we could do our business differently. Our focus turns to innovation....looking for new ways to become efficient with our resources....reviewing business processes and practices, enhancing our ‘green environment’ through continued reducing, reusing, and recycling, and becoming more creative in how we address our staffing capacity.

A downturn in the economy also provides opportunities to develop new partnerships, both within the GoA and externally with stakeholders. Partnerships with other Ministries allow us to share and use our resources more efficiently. Working with our external stakeholders, groups, and other levels of government provides opportunities to share knowledge and expertise, leverage funding, and partnered ways to deliver our programs.

And, while there are many opportunities during a downturn in the economy, there are many challenges too. We need to work better and smarter, not just cheaper. Ensuring the resources are sufficient and allocated appropriately to meet mandated deliverables is key to managing our business. Prioritizing business goals becomes critical....balancing what must be done with what the public expects from government. Maintaining a productive environment for employees also can be challenging....uncertainty can create distractions and affect staff morale, and continuing business with less resources impacts work/life balance for some.

The GoA public service has continually met the challenges and capitalized on the opportunities during uncertain economic times. New employees, in particular, have brought a unique perspective during these times. They view things with a different lens, bringing past experiences and new ideas for managing changes required during lean times.

Marcia Nelson
Deputy Minister
Alberta Health and Wellness

Membership Opportunities

ipac national's new professionals public service without borders

Through its vast network and resources, IPAC is working to bring together the next generation of public leaders to confront the important challenges ahead and to ensure that new public servants in every order of government across Canada and throughout the public sector, play an active and collective role in shaping the future of the public service.

Public Service Without Borders (PSWB) is their newest collaborative platform. PSWB is envisioned as a 'network of networks' using the internet and other social media to create a virtual community of professionals involved in all aspects of public administration, in Canada and abroad.



This system will provide a secure, mobile device accessible (regardless of mobile device) environment where the users own the data and the intellectual property and not the vendor. From a programmatic perspective, public sector workers will be able to connect willingly to one another and share policies, discuss and share program successes and shortcomings, and make new and valuable contacts. Ultimately this could be a very useful with respect to gaining greater public sector efficiencies.

For more details about Public Service Without Borders, please see IPAC's website at www.ipac.ca. To join, send an email to jaube@ipac.ca and IPAC will set up an account for you. If several people from the same workplace want to join, send one email containing the first names, last names and emails of all the individuals and they will create accounts for everyone simultaneously.

- Enjoy networking and raise your profile with peers and leaders in the public sector
- Attend events and conferences designed to advance a new professional's career
- Stay connected with IPAC's social media tool e-Connect
- Learn from insightful workshops and seminars at special reduced fees
- Keep abreast of emerging issues, acquire new knowledge and improve your skills in public administration
- Serve on Regional Group Board of Directors and provide leadership to new professionals
- Learn about job opportunities
- Access members only referenced materials (leading-edge research, reports, case studies)

Joining IPAC is easy!

Go to www.ipac.ca/AddMember and become a member today!



December 19, 2011

IPAC Edmonton Region

invites you to the

Holiday Networking Social

Please join IPAC in celebrating
this holiday season with great
food, fun, and festivities.

Date: Monday, December 19, 2011

Time: 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Where: Metro Billiards Club (10250 - 106 St.)

Fee: No charge

Please register at <http://ipacholidaysocial.eventbrite.com>

Password: holidaysocial