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**Remarks by
Incoming AMO President
2024 AMO Annual General Meeting and Annual Conference
Plenary Hall, Westin Hotel, Ottawa, Ontario
Wednesday, August 21, 2024
8:30 to 8:35 am**

(645 Words)

Good morning, bon matin and aaniin (awn-eeen).

Thank you for the warm introduction.

And thank you to the AMO delegates for the honor of serving as your President.

As my first official act, I want to express my gratitude to Colin Best for his work as President over the past two years.

When I decided to pursue this, many people asked me two questions:

“Are you sure?” and,

“Do you realize how much work it is?”

The answer to both questions is “Yes!” and working with the amazing staff of AMO makes the load much lighter.

I am excited to be your President, and I know there is a great deal of work ahead.

Quite seriously, we all know what it means to serve.

When it’s rewarding, it’s REALLY rewarding – but it’s never easy.

Colin, we all understand that. We appreciate what you have done for us all over the past two years, and thank you.

Past AMO presidents have a long history of helping new AMO presidents.

Colin will remain on the Board, and I know I can count on him for advice and support.

I also want to thank everyone who ran for a Board position. There was a record number, and it is a strong indication of the high regard AMO is held by municipal politicians.

Not everyone got the news that they wanted. I want them to know that we need them to remain engaged.

Personally, I was in a race with a valued colleague and a friend. We have served together on AMO's Board and in other ways for many years, and I know what Wendy has done for communities in northern Ontario. I am so happy that she remains on the AMO board as NOMA Chair.

AMO's Board is relatively large – and it's interesting.

It is amazing to be engaged with more than 40 leaders from across Ontario on challenging matters for us all.

Perspectives from across Ontario come together - large, small, rural, and northern. It is dynamic and never partisan. It's always about what is best for communities in every part of Ontario.

When municipalities work together, we're powerful.

We need to bring that to bear for all municipal governments.

Large municipalities are stronger when small municipalities have their back. Small municipalities are stronger when they know that they can count on large municipalities to be there for them.

When our voices are united, and our needs are clear, it is hard to say 'no' to us.

Former AMO President Doug Reycraft used to say that he was committed to AMO because his neighbor needed him to be – and good neighbors help each other.

We're all neighbors.

I hope you feel that we've made some progress over the last three days – on housing and homelessness, on the opioid crisis, on infrastructure investments and economic development.

Many of you traveled long distances to be here. AMO staff have worked for a year to make sure it was worth your time. Let's take a moment to give a big shout out to all of the AMO staff and volunteers.

The City of Ottawa Mayor and Council, businesses, and their employees are such gracious hosts. AMO Board member Riley Brockington - please pass along our deep appreciation to your council colleagues.

If coming together gets a lot done in three days – we should be coming together, however we can, all the time.

And that's really what AMO's Social and Economic Prosperity Review is proposing.

The Ontario government and Ontario's 444 municipal governments need to come up with better ways to collaborate and coordinate.

We need to help each other to make sure public services are working, that they are affordable, and that they are sustainable – for everyone.

So the call for a review, and greater collaboration, is not going away. Ontario's success is only possible if municipal governments have a seat at the table when important decisions are made.

For 125 years, AMO has created a place where all voices can come together.

We will continue to make sure that all voices know they are welcome here and on municipal councils.

I look forward to serving you as President and I look forward to working with AMO's Board.

Merci, meegwetch, thank you for your support.

Safe roads !