

2026

Manitoba Disaster Management Conference



JANUARY 28-30



What we offer



Access to Plenary Speakers



Access to Breakout Sessions



Access to Workshops



Door Prizes



3 Catered Lunches



4 Catered Refreshment Breaks



One ticket to Pizza
and Pasta Dinner
*(Extra tickets can be purchased
at Registration Desk)*



One ticket to Gala Dinner
and Entertainment
*(Extra tickets can be purchased
at Registration Desk)*

30

YEARS OF MDMC

500+

ANNUAL ATTENDEES

20+

SCHEDULED EVENTS

The MDMC was founded to further increase the level of emergency preparedness in Manitoba and promote the principles of disaster management planning and public awareness by sharing experiences, showcasing technologies, providing information, tools and solutions to problems, and creating networking opportunities.

Who should attend

Emergency Preparedness Planners

First Responders

Elected Officials

Safety Officers

Business Health Professionals

Policy Makers

Non Government Organizations

Business Continuity Planners

School Safety Officers

First Nation communities

Thank you to those who make the MDMC possible

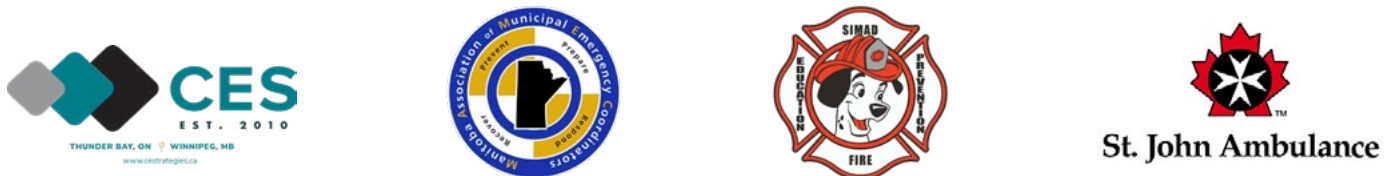
GOLD SPONSORS



SILVER SPONSORS



BRONZE SPONSORS



Our Executive Committee

PICTURED FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

Wade Carriere, Board Member • Sara Wiebe, Treasurer
Shelley Napier, Board Chair • Paul White, Board Member



Registration information

Cost per Delegate

\$550 (must be paid in Canadian funds).

Registration Policy

Paid registrations must be received by January 9, 2026.

Payment must be attached to the registration form in order to be processed. You will not be fully registered until payment is received. Please note that we will not invoice under any circumstance – if your organization requires an invoice in order to process the payment, use the completed registration form as your invoice.

The conference makes every effort to provide a healthy, appealing menu for all meal functions. **If you have any dietary restrictions, please notify the Registrar upon registering;** if you do not advise us ahead of time, we cannot guarantee that the hotel will be able to accommodate your last minute request. Please ensure you select your session preferences as the sessions are listed on delegates' nametags. If sessions are full, priority will be given to delegates who signed up for that session – all delegates not signed up for that session will be asked to leave and attend another session.

You will be issued a written confirmation of your paid registration. This confirmation is your receipt.

Registration Desk

Delegates must present themselves at the Registration Desk in order to receive their registration packages. Registration packages will be released only to the individual whose name appears on the nametag (in the event that the registered delegate is unable to attend, a substitute may be made and a new nametag will be issued by the Registrar at the Registration Desk).

Registered delegates, speakers and sponsors must wear their nametags for access to all conference functions.

Payment Options

BY CREDIT CARD: All credit card payments must be made online through the link above, paying through PayPal (you can sign up as guest if you do not have a PayPal account); please clearly note in comments who the payment is for if you are registering on behalf of delegate(s).

BY CASH: Payments in cash must be made in person.

BY E-TRANSFER: Send to **info@manitobadmcc.com** (we are set up for auto deposit); please clearly note in comments who the payment is for if you are registering on behalf of delegate(s).

BY CHEQUE: Make cheque payable in Canadian funds to "Disaster Management Conference".

Mail form and payment to:

Manitoba Disaster Management Conference
PO Box 70044 Kenaston PO
Winnipeg MB R3P 0X6

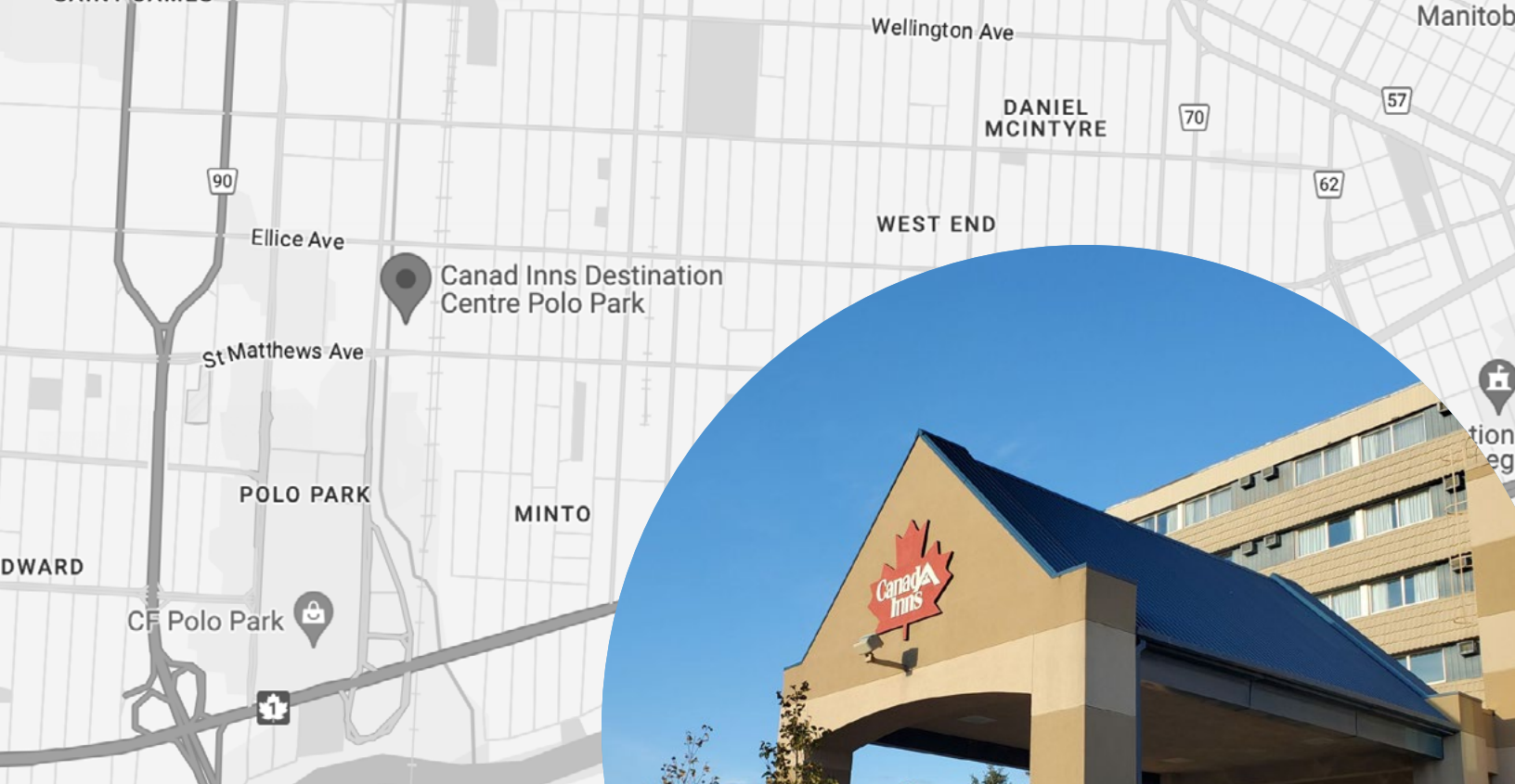
Cancellation / Substitution Process

Cancellations must be requested in writing to **registration@manitobadmcc.com** prior to **January 9, 2026**, and will each be subject to a \$50 administration fee. No refunds will be given after this deadline (no exceptions).

Substitutions may be made at any time without penalty. Please notify the Registrar of the substitution as soon as possible.

Registrar Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the registration process, please contact the Registrar, Amber Barrett, at **registration@manitobadmcc.com**



Getting to the Conference

Canad Inns Destination Centre Polo Park
1405 St. Matthews
Winnipeg, MB

Hotel Direct Phone: 204-775-8791
Central Reservations Phone: 1-888-332-2623

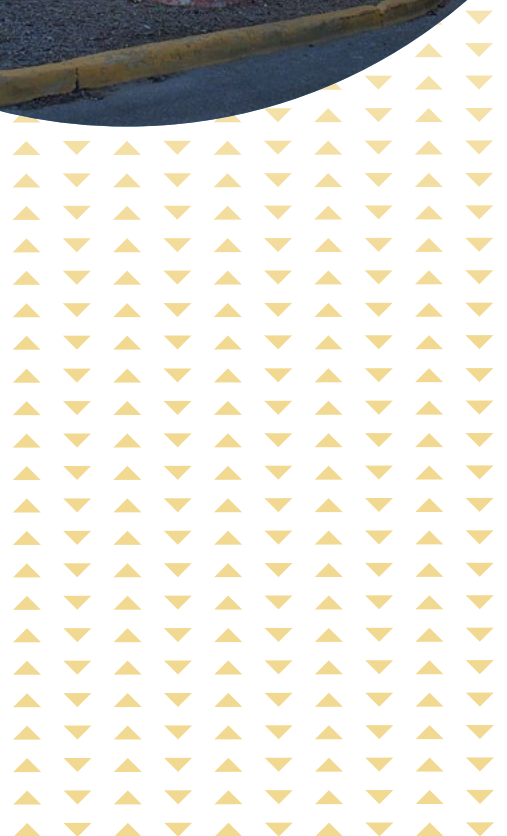
A block of standard guestrooms (single or double occupancy) have been set aside at a special rate of \$142/night (plus applicable taxes) for the Disaster Management Conference 2026. To obtain this special rate, you must provide them with the **group rate #449974** at the time of booking.

Please note the room block will be held until December 18, 2026; the Canad Inns Destination Centre Polo Park will still accept reservations after December 18, 2026 at the special rate, but it will be subject to guest room availability at the time of booking.

Reserve your rooms early as the hotel has fully booked in past conferences! In the event that Canad Inns Destination Centre Polo Park gets fully booked, the onus will be on you to find an alternate hotel.

You will find free ample parking at Canad Inns Destination Centre Polo Park.

Please note that NO OUTSIDE FOOD OR DRINK is allowed inside the conference.



Our 2026 Featured Speakers



Ngaire Abernethy

PRESENTATION

Breakout Session B4 - Animal-Assisted
Crisis Response: A New DM Resource



Ngaire Abernethy recently retired after 45 years as a front-line social worker. Most recently she worked for Westman Crisis Services and in the Brandon Regional Health Centre's Emergency Dept. Ngaire and her husband George were posted in many rural and northern communities with the RCMP. Ngaire has been providing support to first responders and health care workers through several CISM networks for most of her career. Ngaire is a board member of Project Resilience 911 and a clinical trainer for the Peer and Trauma Support Systems training program under the Mood Disorders Society of Canada. Ngaire is an active volunteer with her therapy dogs. She is a co-founder of PATDogs therapy dog group, a member of the PATDogs Trauma Response Emotional Assistance Team (T.R.E.A.T.), and is an adviser to Paws 4 Valour, a canine-assisted peer support group for public safety personnel. In 2024, Ngaire completed a Graduate Certificate in Animal-Assisted Social Work at Slippery Rock University in Pennsylvania. Her current canine partner Koki is a tiny, brave lap dog.

Grant Durfey

PRESENTATION

Keynote 5 - Breaking the Ice:
Lessons from the 2025 Ice Storm



Grant Durfey is a professional emergency manager currently serving as the Manager of Emergency Management and Community Emergency Management Coordinator (CEMC) for the County of Simcoe. He began his career as a frontline paramedic, where he developed a deep appreciation for emergency response and community resilience. Motivated to make a broader impact, Grant pursued part-time studies in emergency management, earning both a certificate and a graduate diploma in the field. In 2019, he transitioned into full-time emergency management, where he has focused on enhancing municipal preparedness through practical programming and the strategic use of community-based resources. Most recently, Grant completed a Master of Arts in Disaster and Emergency Management from Royal Roads University. Grant is passionate about building resilient communities from the ground up, combining frontline experience with academic insight to drive meaningful change.

Mark Emrick

PRESENTATION

Workshop Session W2 -

ICS - - - EOC: Joined by a dotted line!



Mark retired in 2022 after a career spanning trades, business ownership, 31+ years in emergency services, and municipal leadership. He moved from Brandon to Melita, Manitoba, in 1989. Over 19 years there, he built a successful auto glass business, served as Chamber of Commerce President, sat two terms on council, and spent nearly two decades in the fire service, ultimately as Fire Chief. In 2008, Mark joined the Office of the Fire Commissioner (OFC) as an Emergency Services Instructor. He taught multiple disciplines and responded to provincial floods, wildland fires, and search operations. When the OFC assumed Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) for ICS Canada around 2012, he was appointed Lead ICS Instructor. Mark delivered all levels and positions of ICS, and represented Manitoba as an instructor in national ICS Canada-sponsored deliveries, in addition to contributing to ICS Canada doctrine reviews as a subject matter expert. He served a short term as Emergency Coordinator, volunteers with Team Rubicon Canada, and served as TR Canada's Chief ICS Instructor. Mark holds a Certificate in Adult Education with Honours, specializing in curriculum design and program development. Following retirement, he was invited to instruct the inaugural ICS Canada 0305 All-Hazards Type III delivery and received employment offers from ICS consulting firms across Canada. However, the Manitoba government denied his Lead Instructor authorization solely because he was no longer an employee. This restriction prevented all national opportunities but led to the founding of Dynam-ICS™ Training Solutions, an independent company delivering ICS education across Manitoba.

Emily George

PRESENTATION

Breakout Session C3 - Stronger Together:
The Power of Recreation in Emergencies



Emily George is the Executive Director of Recreation Manitoba, where she leads efforts to strengthen the recreation sector and support practitioners across the province. In her role, Emily champions the essential role recreation plays in advancing community wellbeing, resilience, and inclusion, ensuring the sector's voice is recognized at both local and provincial levels.

Emily brings a uniquely broad perspective to her work, having travelled extensively across Canada and developed a deep knowledge of the diverse realities, challenges, and strengths of communities in every province and territory. This experience enriches her leadership, allowing her to connect local Manitoba priorities with national trends and opportunities in recreation, health, and community development. Alongside her experience, Emily completed a Master of Arts in Physical Education from the University of Victoria, a Bachelors of Recreation and Sport Studies from the University of New Brunswick, and a certificate in Non-Profit Leadership for Impact from the University of Toronto. With a strong background in leadership and community engagement, Emily is known for fostering collaboration and innovation within the recreation field. She works closely with municipal practitioners, provincial partners, and national organizations to promote the value of recreation as a driver of health, belonging, and quality of life. Passionate about processes and Manitoba, Emily is committed to elevating the sector, creating opportunities for growth, and ensuring that communities of all sizes have the voice and support they need to thrive.

Perron Goodyear

PRESENTATION

Workshop Session W1 - From Chaos to Coordination: Turning Generosity into Impact



With over two decades of experience in disaster and emergency management at the local, regional, and national levels, Perron has held leadership roles across the public, private, and non-governmental sectors. Recognized for his collaborative approach and ability to bring clarity to complex incidents, he is passionate about incident management, crisis intervention, disaster social services, and crisis communications. His work consistently emphasizes the importance of coordination and accountability across all four components of emergency management—mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery. From 2016 to 2022, Perron served as national director of disaster and emergency management for an international NGO, and more recently completed a two-and-a-half-year term with Public Safety Canada. In addition to founding Goodyear Emergency Management Consulting, he currently serves as a Sessional Instructor with the School of Public Safety, Emergency Management Division at the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC), and as an Emergency Management Specialist with Napier Emergency Consulting. Perron has contributed to more than 30 disaster responses across domestically and internationally. He has completed advanced training at the provincial, national, and international levels—including studies at the Canadian Emergency Management College—and holds a Master of Arts in Disaster and Emergency Management from Royal Roads University. His graduate research, Socioeconomics and Emergency Preparedness: A Collective Case Study of Low-Income Residents in London, Ontario, explored the intersection of social vulnerability and preparedness.

Brock Happychuk

PRESENTATION

Breakout Session B3 - AlertMB: An Overview of the National Public Alerting System in Manitoba



Brock Happychuk is a Senior Emergency Management Engagement Specialist with Manitoba Emergency Management Organization (EMO). Prior to joining Manitoba EMO in 2024, he served 24 years in the field of wildland fire as a manager with Manitoba Wildfire Service, national instructor, and firefighter with experience across Canada and the United States. Brock's experience has emphasized the value of strong networks and relationships towards effective and efficient emergency management programs. Brock holds BComm (Hons) from University of Manitoba, and has emergency services training as a firefighter, paramedic and has operated in multiple Incident Command System capacities.

Marie-Eve Hamel

PRESENTATION

Breakout Session B3 - AlertMB: An Overview of the National Public Alerting System in Manitoba



Marie-Eve Hamel is the Director, Management and Development of Operations at the Canadian Red Cross (CRC). In her role, she leads large-scale disaster responses and recovery operations in Quebec and contributes to the development of CRC's national recovery framework. Since joining the organization in 2017, Marie-Eve has worked extensively in both relief and recovery responses, developing and managing programs that support individuals, families, small businesses, and communities affected by disasters. Prior to her work with the CRC, Marie-Eve earned a Ph.D. focused on the post-conflict experiences of survivors of wartime sexual violence and the critical role humanitarian assistance plays in their social reintegration.

Brad Hay

PRESENTATION

Breakout Session B2 - From Crisis to Coordination: Manitoba Hydro's 2025 Wildfire Season Response



Brad Hay has been with Manitoba Hydro for nearly 25 years and is the Enterprise Emergency Response Coordinator. Brad has supported Manitoba Hydro through the 2021 and 2025 wildfire seasons, the 2022 flood season, the COVID-19 Pandemic, and multiple business continuity challenges. Brad has a diploma in electrical engineering technology, designations as a Maintenance Management Professional and associate business continuity planner. He also holds certificates in emergency management, emergency exercise design, and most recently he earned a degree in Emergency and Security Management Studies. With an unwavering commitment to safety, business continuity, and operational resilience, Brad is a highly respected and trusted leader in the utility sector, known for his expertise in emergency response and continuity planning.

Dr. Ahmed Jwely

PRESENTATION

Keynote 4 - PTSD, Then What?



Dr. Ahmed Jwely, FRCP(C), is a distinguished psychiatrist with extensive experience in clinical practice, medical leadership, and medicolegal assessment. Certified by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, he holds active medical licenses in Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta. Dr. Jwely's clinical career spans significant roles in hospital settings, including inpatient and emergency psychiatry at institutions like the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Trillium Health Partners (THP), and the Health Sciences Center in Winnipeg, where he also served as Associate Medical Director of HSC-Emergency psychiatry and Crisis Services (CRA). He is the Medical Director of Seasons Medical Center in Winnipeg and holds an appointment to the Mental Health Review Board in Manitoba. A dedicated educator, Dr. Jwely has held academic appointments as an Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Western Ontario (UWO), the University of Toronto (UOT), and as an instructor at the University of Manitoba. He holds certifications in catastrophic impairment evaluation (C-CAT) and medicolegal expertise (CMLE). His professional contributions include research on immigration and psychosis, published in the Asia Pacific Psychiatry Journal, and he is an active member of numerous professional associations, including the Canadian and American Psychiatric Associations.

Dr. Patricia Martel

PRESENTATION

Breakout Session B1 - The Changing World of Emergency Management



Dr. Patricia Martel has over 18 years experience as a practitioner in emergency management. Her career has included work with provincial, regional, and municipal governments, Indigenous communities, NGOs, and the private sector. Patricia has served in a range of positions in different Emergency Operation Centres (EOCs) for many large scale events and emergencies triggered by hazards including multiple severe forest fire seasons and northern spring breakup flooding, Toronto G8/G20, Goderich tornado, Pan Am Games, Hurricane Sandy, COVID-19 pandemic, Southern Niagara Blizzard/Multi-Hazard Emergency, and the Total Solar Eclipse. She has been in the field both domestically and internationally during impact for a variety of hazards from tornadoes to floods to understand how to improve planning and responses. Patricia developed and managed the 2012 Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment program for the Province of Ontario Identification which won international acclaim for its innovative methodology. She now manages the Ontario Office of Napier Emergency Consulting. Patricia also has a PhD focused on effective operational emergency planning for vulnerable populations and has served as an instructor for several university emergency management graduate programs.

Michelle Yang McLean



PRESENTATION

Breakout Session C2 - Strengthening Accessibility in Emergency Management and Risk Communication Systems

Michelle McLean is a PhD Candidate in Population Health at the University of Ottawa. She has worked across academic, government, and non-profit sectors to reduce disaster risk and build resilient, inclusive communities. Her current research focuses on making risk communication and community engagement more accessible to everyone, with the goal of creating more effective emergency management systems that recognize and respond to the diverse needs of all people. Michelle's previous experience includes roles in identifying indicators for Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP) at Public Health Ontario, developing post-COVID-condition guidelines with the Public Health Agency of Canada, and collaborating with Indigenous partners on initiatives to expand access to remote, culturally competent trauma care. Her work is driven by a commitment to advancing equity and ensuring that no one is left behind in emergency management and public health systems.

Shelley Napier



PRESENTATION

Workshop Session W1 - From Chaos to Coordination: Turning Generosity into Impact

Shelley was employed with the Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization for 32 years, retiring in 2017. Her career has been spent working with Manitoba communities, Indigenous clients, academic institutions, businesses and organizations offering emergency management program building through training, education and planning. Shelley's extensive knowledge of emergency management has been gained through work with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Institute of Public Administration of Canada (IPAC), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the United States as well as through years managing emergencies across Canada and Europe. She was Manitoba's representative on the Canadian Emergency Management College's training committee for 17 years, developing and teaching educational programs to emergency managers.

Shelley is the founding member and chair of the Manitoba Disaster Management Conference (1991) and the founding member and Executive Director of the Manitoba Association of Municipal Emergency Coordinators (2018). She has been awarded the Emergency Management Exemplary Service Award for her work achievement in the areas of prevention, preparation, response, and recovery from emergencies and disasters in Canada. Shelley was recently awarded the King Charles III Coronation medal for her emergency management work with communities and First Nation communities in Canada. She is a frequent contributor on television and radio during emergency events in Manitoba and participated on the television documentary series "Disaster Deja Vu" as an emergency management expert contributor. Now as the managing director of Napier Emergency Consulting, she works coast to coast in Canada teaching and educating communities, Indigenous clients, businesses, and academic institutions about the importance of having programs recover from disasters.

Rachael Oliver

PRESENTATION

Workshop Session W4 - Recovery Trends and Challenges: Anticipating Long-Term Community Needs



Rachael Oliver is a leading practitioner in community-centered disaster recovery and currently serves as Senior Manager, Recovery at the Canadian Red Cross. She has extensive experience supporting municipalities, First Nations, and Métis communities through Canada's largest wildfires and floods, and has led recovery field operations nation-wide. Rachael advances approaches that strengthen both pre-disaster readiness and long-term community recovery, with a focus on locally led recovery, cross-sector collaboration, and recovery system design. She holds a Master of Arts in Disaster and Emergency Management from Royal Roads University.

Jennifer Parkman

PRESENTATION

Breakout Session C4 - Southern Chief's Organization and MKO Panel on 2025 Wildfires



Jennifer Parkman is a member of War Lake First Nation with experience in crisis intervention, child welfare, mental health, and policy work. She has a strong background in advocacy, working to advance the rights of First Nation communities through a traditional lens on systemic change. Most recently, Jennifer served as co-lead in the Manitoba wildfire evacuation efforts through the Southern Chiefs' Organization, delivering vital support to those affected by addressing service gaps, advocating for impacted evacuees, coordinating efforts, and deploying organizational resources.

Geoff Reimer

PRESENTATION

Breakout Session C4 - Southern Chief's Organization and MKO Panel on 2025 Wildfires



Geoff Reimer is an accomplished environmental and water resources professional with over two decades of progressive experience in government, municipal, and First Nations program leadership. He holds a Water Resources Engineering Technology Degree from SIAST Palliser Institute with undergraduate studies in Geological Sciences at the University of Winnipeg. Currently serving as Director of the Water and Environment Program for the Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc., Geoffrey leads the development of First Nations Owned and Operated Water utility, Solid waste management, environmental stewardship and emergency management initiatives that are based in the upholding of First Nation's treaty and inherent rights. His career includes senior roles with the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba, where he oversaw large-scale water management projects, drainage and flooding regulation, and solid waste operations. As President of GPR Project Management and Consulting Inc., Geoffrey continues to provide expert technical guidance to municipalities, developers, and communities on sustainable water resource planning and policy.

John R. Robertson



PRESENTATION

Keynote 3 - Living the I AM in an I HAVE Culture: Advancing from CharactOR to Character, Being the Leader People trust through Critical Moments

Breakout Session C1 - Boost Your Battery: Reframing Resilience:
Run Toward the Roar - Stay Charged, Lead Well, and Finish Well

With over 30 years of experience in crisis intervention and leadership development, John is a Workforce Wellness & Culture Alignment Specialist who helps organizations move beyond reactive survival mode to proactive resilience. He works alongside progressive leaders—especially those in high-pressure sector services—to turn high-stakes moments into opportunities for growth, engagement, and retention. As the founder of FORTLOG Services Inc., he has partnered with first responders, Indigenous communities, non-profits, small businesses, and more. His qualifications include Conversational IQ™, psychological health & safety, ICF coaching, crisis intervention, trauma treatment, certified grief counsellor, and a bachelor's and master's degrees. He is also the author of two bestselling books: Run Toward the Roar: Transforming Crisis and Change into the Opportunity to Thrive, Living the I AM in an I HAVE Culture: Being the Leader People Trust through Critical Moments. Offstage, John finds balance at his off-grid family cabin, enjoying the simpler things in life. He often jokes that he should have started with grandkids and skipped parenting altogether. He's the husband of one, father of three, and proud grandfather of two.

Loren Schinkel



PRESENTATION

Keynote 1 - Leadership Lessons from the
Lac du Bonnet Wildfires of 2025

Loren was elected as the Reeve for the Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet in a 2016 byelection. Since then, he has been acclaimed in 2018, and 2022 and is currently serving his community and region in his third term. Loren served 30 years in law enforcement, commencing his policing career with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 1978. In 1981, he joined the Winnipeg Police Service, where he spent many years in specialized investigative units, such as Robbery/Homicide and Major Crimes. Loren was promoted to Sergeant and was also selected as the Coordinator of the Emergency Response Tactical Unit, a specialized unit that he served for 17 years. Loren is committed to his role as Reeve, to serving his residents and region where he grew up, to make it a strong, thriving, safe community, a "Four Seasons Playground" where "People come for a weekend and stay for a lifetime."

Jay Shaw



PRESENTATION

Keynote 6 - Panel Presentation - Senior Leadership
and the Changing World of Emergency Management

Jay Shaw is the Deputy Chief of Safety, Emergency Management and Public Information with the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service. Shaw was responsible for developing the city's Office of Emergency Management in 2017 and has led the City of Winnipeg through several major disasters and emergencies including the global COVID -19 pandemic. Jay is a graduate of Harvard University's National Preparedness Leadership Initiative studying Crisis Leadership and has recently completed the International Association of Fire Chief's Executive Development Institute.

Tyler Smith

PRESENTATION

Keynote 2 - We are Never Alone



Tyler Smith, winner of The Amazing Race Canada Season 9, is a survivor, mental health advocate, entrepreneur, and public speaker who has turned personal tragedy into a mission to inspire and support others. A survivor of the 2018 Humboldt Broncos bus crash, which claimed the lives of 16 teammates, staff, and coaches, Tyler has dedicated his life to raising awareness about mental health and the power of vulnerability. Alongside his partner Kat Kastner, Tyler captured the hearts of Canadians as Team #TyKat, often paying tribute to the "16 angels" lost in the tragedy. Their victory on The Amazing Race Canada was a powerful testament to resilience, teamwork, and the enduring strength of hope. Tyler's journey of healing led him to found Not Alone Co., a mental health awareness clothing line and social enterprise that promotes open conversations around trauma, PTSD, and mental health. He is also the co-host of the podcast Speak Your Mind, alongside NHL veteran Riley Sheahan, which focuses on normalizing discussions about mental health with guests from sports, entertainment, and beyond. Through public speaking, entrepreneurship, and advocacy, Tyler continues to inspire individuals and communities to create safe spaces to belong, embrace connections to empower one another, and support systems that enable paths of improving healing, hope and community.

Louise Stitt

PRESENTATION

Breakout Session B4 - Animal-Assisted
Crisis Response: A New DM Resource



Louise Stitt has been involved in Emergency Services for 40+ years, first working as a Paramedic with Winnipeg EMS for 10 years, while volunteering with the Canadian Red Cross in multiple roles. She completed her Advanced Care Paramedic certification in the U.S. in 1981. She was Program Developer for EMS Education with MB Health and worked with the Office of the Fire Commissioner as an EMS Educator and Program Coordinator for the newly developed Provincial Critical Incident Stress Management initiative. Her many years of supporting debriefings for emergency services personnel created a passion for easing the inevitable psychological stressors related to the fallout from being a part of disaster and emergency scenes. She retired in 2019. Louise is amazed and grateful for the opportunity to be involved with her canine pet therapy partner, Sadie, from whom she has learned, over the last few years, about how animal assisted crisis interventions can improve the lives of those who need it most.



Laine Wilson



PRESENTATION

Breakout Session C3 - Stronger Together: The Power of Recreation in Emergencies

Laine Wilson is the Director of Community Relations with the Rural Municipality of Rockwood, where she leads initiatives that strengthen local engagement, safety, and quality of life. With over a decade of experience in recreation and community development, Laine has been a strong advocate for the essential role recreation plays in building resilient, connected communities.

Laine is a University of Manitoba graduate with a Bachelor of Recreation Management and Community Development and completed a Public Relations certificate from the University of Toronto. She currently serves as a Board Member with the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) and is a Past President of Recreation Manitoba, where she has championed provincial and national initiatives that highlight the value of recreation in advancing community wellbeing. Laine is passionate about collaboration, leveraging networks, and ensuring recreation is recognized as a key partner in areas such as health, emergency preparedness, and community resilience. Whether working locally or at a national level, Laine brings energy, vision, and a deep commitment to fostering thriving communities where people feel safe, connected, and supported.

City of Winnipeg Speakers



PRESENTATION

Workshop Session W3 - From Rubble to Resilience: Short and Long-Term Recovery Strategies After a Tornado

Larissa Farrell - OEM

Dwayne Hackinen - OEM

Louise Boily - ESS

Brian McCorriston - WFPS Fire Ops

Steve Brglez - WFPS EMS Ops

Raj Sharma - Director of Safety

Inspector Jenn McKinnon - WPS

Sergeant Chris McLean – WPS

Agenda

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28

8:30–10:30AM

Registration

10:30–10:45AM

Opening Remarks and Announcements

10:45AM–Noon

Keynote 1: Leadership Lessons from the Lac du Bonnet Wildfires of 2025

Loren Schinkel, Reeve, Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet

In May of 2025, a major wildfire happened in the RM of Lac du Bonnet. Along with extensive damage to the community, this wildfire took the lives of two beloved longtime residents of Lac du Bonnet and required extensive evacuations. All aspects of the of Lac du Bonnet's emergency plan and program were put in place. Reeve Loren Schinkel will address the impact and leadership lessons learned from the crisis.

Noon–1:30PM

Lunch and Exhibitor Visits

1:30–2:30PM

**BREAKOUT
SESSIONS B**

B1: The Changing World of Emergency Management

Dr. Patricia Martel, Ph.D, Napier Emergency Consulting (Ontario Office)

Emergency management is continuing to evolve. Large-scale, complex emergencies are becoming more frequent due to factors such as climate change, socioeconomic changes, and our increasing dependence on technology. These emergencies present greater challenges due to the number of people who are impacted, scale of area affected, uncertainties, resources, and the number of partners that are often involved. Whether the emergency is triggered by a hazard that allows for advanced warning or not, there are planning and response opportunities that can help emergency management programs move towards a more proactive approach in effectively managing this type of emergency. During this session, we will examine some large-scale complex emergencies and how effective emergency management practices could support future planning and responses for large-scale complex emergencies.

B2: From Crisis to Coordination: Manitoba Hydro's 2025 Wildfire Season Response

Brad Hay, Manitoba Hydro

This presentation will be a review of a few highlights from Manitoba Hydro's response during the 2025 wildfire season. This season was the most impactful wildfire season in a generation and with a paucity of records available, may be the most impactful in Manitoba Hydro's history. In that season, Manitoba Hydro responded to multiple wildfire impacts on infrastructure, supported the larger provincial response and in some cases, acted directly to protect Manitoba Hydro assets in order to limit risk, preserve service and/or lessen impacts. The presentation will provide a timeline of events, detail separate functions of the response, impart lessons learned and observations, and finally take time for questions and answers.

B3: AlertMB: An Overview of the National Public Alerting System in Manitoba

Brock Happychuk, Manitoba Emergency Management Organization

Timeliness and reach are critical in providing potentially life-saving information to Canadians. The National Public Alerting System, also known as Alert Ready, delivers emergency alert messaging to Canadians through television, radio and compatible wireless devices. Launched in 2015, the functionality and application of the Alert Ready system continues to evolve and expand. As the managing authority for Manitoba's Alert Ready program, AlertMB, Manitoba EMO will provide an overview of the program including how the system functions, the difference from other mass notification systems and alerting platforms, the types of alerts, and how to become an AlertMB user.

B4: Animal-Assisted Crisis Response - A New DM Resource

Louise Stitt; Ngairé Abernethy (with their canine partners Sadie and Koki)

Dog and handler teams are essential players in emergency and disaster responses. Canines provide relief and encouragement to responders, promote healthy coping for people affected by disaster, and their handlers facilitate referrals to formal mental health support when needed. Participants in this session will learn about PATDogs Trauma Response Emotional Assistance Team (T.R.E.A.T.), identifying best practices in the use of Animal-Assisted Crisis Response and the importance of certified teams. Benefits of this intervention, including interaction with TREAT canine teams, will be shared to illustrate the effectiveness of this form of crisis intervention.

2:30–3:00PM

Exhibitor Break

3:00–4:30PM

Keynote 2: We are Never Alone

Tyler Smith, survivor of the Humboldt Broncos tragedy and mental health advocate

In a world where vulnerability is often misunderstood as weakness, many people bury their emotions, sacrificing their health, safety, and future success. Tyler Smith, survivor of the Humboldt Broncos tragedy and mental health advocate, shares his powerful story of resilience, healing, and hope. Drawing from his personal experiences, Tyler encourages individuals and organizations to slow down, reflect, and create a culture of connection where everyone feels seen, heard, and supported. Through meaningful conversations and authentic connections, Tyler inspires others to shatter the silence around mental health and embrace the power of vulnerability. Participants will learn to identify the barriers that prevent individuals from seeking help and explore practical strategies for managing self-induced stress caused by anxiety, worry, and insecurity. Tyler emphasizes the transformative power of sharing personal stories to foster trust and create safe spaces where others feel empowered to find their voice. Attendees will gain actionable tools to build resilience, cultivate wellness-focused communities, and effectively support individuals facing challenges. This session equips organizations and individuals to prioritize meaningful connections and foster environments where everyone can thrive, reclaiming their strength, courage, and potential for growth.

5:00–8:00PM

Casual Dinner (ticket provided)

Please Note: Adults only, no children allowed

Delegates are encouraged to socialize and share experiences from their communities or workplace.

8:30–8:45AM

Announcements and Conference Updates

8:45AM–NOON

WORKSHOP SESSIONS W

With a break:
10:00–10:20AM

W1: From Chaos to Coordination: Turning Generosity into Impact

Perron Goodyear, Napier Emergency Consulting; Shelley Napier, Napier Emergency Consulting

When disaster strikes, communities often experience an outpouring of generosity in the form of donated goods and financial contributions. While well-intentioned, these donations can create significant logistical challenges if they are not properly coordinated. This interactive session will introduce the fundamentals of Donations Management and guide participants through a realistic, Manitoba-based scenario. Working in groups, attendees will tackle common challenges, apply best practices, and identify practical strategies to ensure that donations truly support response and recovery efforts. By the end of the session, participants will walk away with a clear understanding of Donations Management principles and the foundation for creating or strengthening a Donations Management plan for their own organization.

W2: ICS ---- EOC: Joined by a dotted line!

Mark Emrick, Dynam-ICS™ Training Solutions

This interactive session explores the fundamentals of the Incident Command System (ICS) and its vital connection to Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs). Dynam-ICS™ Training Solutions delivers a modern, engaging approach for non-emergency service audiences. Mark shows that ICS isn't rocket science—we actually use its main concept every day—and demonstrates how the ICS concept can apply directly to EOCs, and every day decision making. Too often treated as separate entities, Incident Command and the EOC Director must collaborate for the good of the community. A short activity reinforces ICS basics before examining how the “dotted line” of communication and cooperation clarifies roles, responsibilities, and pathways for effective response, support, and recovery.

W3: From Rubble to Resilience: Short and Long-Term Recovery Strategies After a Tornado

Mike Olczyk & Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service team

Join members of the City of Winnipeg's Fire Paramedic Service, Police Service, Office of Emergency Management, and Emergency Social Services as they explore the critical stages of recovery following a tornado's impact. Building on the 2024 MDMC “Tornado Response and Recovery in Manitoba” workshop, this session will further focus on both short and long-term recovery strategies for communities to consider. Enhance your knowledge of conducting windshield assessments, mass casualty management, and effective critical infrastructure prioritization by participating in interactive exercises. The workshop will also review the importance of responder mental health needs after a disaster, the transition from life safety to rebuilding efforts, and implementing mitigation strategies for future resilience.

W4: Recovery Trends and Challenges: Anticipating Long-Term Community Needs

Marie-Eve Hamel, Canadian Red Cross; Rachael Oliver, Canadian Red Cross

Recovery doesn't end when the flames are out or the waters recede—it unfolds over years and requires communities to anticipate what comes next. Drawing on lessons from the 2025 Manitoba Wildfires and other recent disasters, this interactive workshop will explore common challenges and emerging trends in long-term recovery. Participants will examine impacts such as housing, mental health, economic stability, and community leadership, and work together to identify strategies for building readiness early. By the end, participants will leave with tools and approaches to help strengthen resilience and position their communities for more effective long-term recovery.

NOON–1:15PM

Lunch and Exhibitor Visits

1:15–2:30PM

Keynote 3: Living the I AM in an I HAVE Culture: Advancing from CharactOR to Character, Being the Leader People trust through Critical Moments

John R. Robertson, Workforce Wellness & Culture Alignment Specialist and founder of FORTLOG Services Inc.

How often have we heard that people in leadership question why they wanted to be a leader? The pressures, demands, consequences, and dealing with shifting expectations, the leader can lose who they are, and what matters, through these critical moments. Discover how authentic leaders navigate crises, build trust, engage teams, and foster resilience to inspire others amid challenges. When the foundation is set, even critics cannot dispute the credibility, it's the type of authority that position and title cannot provide. Leveraging 25+ years of helping and guiding leadership transform critical moments [crisis, change, and/or growth], and his second bestseller book, this keynote defines the leadership character that can lead your team people follow through these challenging times, building trust, and respect with one another and with those outside the organization.

2:30–3:00PM

Exhibitor Break

3:00–4:00PM

BREAKOUT SESSIONS C

C1: Boost Your Battery: Reframing Resilience: Run Toward the Roar — Stay Charged, Lead Well, and Finish Well

John R. Robertson, FORTLOG Services Inc.

In high-stakes professions you're trained to be ready — always. But constant readiness can come at a cost. Too often, resilience becomes code for "just keep going," even when you're running on empty. This interactive, hands-on session goes beyond the buzzwords to help you plan beyond just resilience in real time. Using relatable sports metaphors and the personal battery framework, this session is designed to help you recognize what drains your energy, what recharges it, and how to lead from a place of strength — not survival. At the heart of the breakout is your personalized VERI PLAN®, plus a VERI practical tool based on Values, Encouragement, Responsibility and Initiative.

C2: Strengthening Accessibility in Emergency Management and Risk Communication Systems

Michelle Yang McLean

A growing number of disasters experienced in Canada places increasing demand on emergency management systems, who are under more pressure than ever to communicate information about how to prepare for an emergency and what actions to take during it. Many have reported that risk communications through channels such as emergency alerts, news media, social media, safety notifications, and public health websites- are often not accessible to persons with disabilities, making them more vulnerable to disasters. This is concerning, as persons with disabilities make up 27% of the Canadian population, and 43% of the aging population has a chronic illness that results in a disability. This session will introduce a new Disability-Inclusive Risk Communication Framework developed by researchers at the University of Ottawa as a tool for emergency managers to better manage risks before and during disasters. The Framework provides practical strategies across key areas: accessibility by design, multi-modal communication channels, culturally and linguistically appropriate messaging, and training and capacity development. The strategies are built around three guiding ideas: Content; Construction; Culture. The Disability-Inclusive Disaster Risk Communication Framework supports the Accessible Canada Act (ACA) and its principle of "Nothing without us". It offers practical guidance for making emergency communication more inclusive and effective for everyone in Canada.

C3: Stronger Together: The Power of Recreation in Emergencies

Laine Wilson; Emily George

When emergencies strike, whether they are floods, wildfires, pandemics, or community crises, recreation may not be the first thing that comes to mind. Yet recreation programs, facilities, and practitioners often become essential support for communities during and after emergencies. Recreation spaces are where people find shelter, information, and connection. Equally important, recreation practitioners bring extensive networks across local organizations, service providers, and volunteers, allowing them to mobilize resources and respond quickly when communities are under stress. In this session, we will explore the practical role recreation plays in emergency response and recovery. Drawing on Manitoba-based experiences and national perspectives, they will highlight how recreation professionals and organizations have supported communities through disruption, by leveraging their networks, adapting facilities as emergency hubs, and fostering mental health and resilience through play and connection. Participants will leave with concrete ideas on how to better integrate recreation into emergency planning, ensuring it is recognized not only as a quality-of-life service, but as a critical component of community resilience.

C4: Southern Chief's Organization Panel on 2025 Wildfires

Geoff Reimer, SCO; Jennifer Parkman, SCO

The 2025 Wildfire Season affected many Indigenous Communities and caused record breaking evacuations from Northern Manitoba. The citizens were housed in Winnipeg and surrounding communities and moved repeatedly throughout the province. This panel discussion will discuss problems that arose, how the Indigenous Service Organizations worked with Leadership to bridge the gap between the Provincial response and the need of their Nations and people.

6:00–6:30PM

Cocktails (cash bar)

Please Note: Adults only, no children allowed

6:30PM

Gala Dinner (business casual) and Door Prizes (ticket provided)

Please Note: Adults only, no children allowed

8:15PM

Special Entertainment - Comedian Dean Jenkinson

Please Note: Adults only, no children allowed

FRIDAY, JANUARY 30

8:45–9:00AM

Announcements and Conference Updates

9:00AM–10:15AM

Keynote 4: PTSD, Then What?

Dr. Ahmed Jwely, FRCP(C), Medical Director, Seasons Medical Center in Winnipeg

This is the most important question one can ask after a diagnosis or recognizing the symptoms. The “then what” is the path toward healing, and it is a journey that, while challenging, is absolutely possible. Think of it this way: The diagnosis of PTSD is not a life sentence; it's a starting point. It's putting a name to the struggle, which in turn reveals the map for the path forward.

10:15–10:45AM

Exhibitor Break

10:45AM–NOON

Keynote 5: Breaking the Ice: Lessons from the 2025 Ice Storm

Grant Durfey, Manager of Emergency Management and Community Emergency Management Coordinator, County of Simcoe (Ontario)

In late March 2025, a severe ice storm struck south-central Ontario, causing widespread power outages, critical infrastructure disruptions, and extensive tree damage. This presentation offers a behind-the-scenes look at the County of Simcoe's emergency management response, from the initial warnings to the coordination efforts with over a dozen local municipalities, provincial partners, and numerous NGOs. Beyond the immediate response, the session will explore the early stages of recovery, including debris management and community support strategies required for an event of this magnitude. Attendees will gain insights into the challenges and lessons learned from managing a complex, multi-jurisdictional emergency.

NOON–1:00PM

Lunch and Exhibitor Visits

1:00–2:15PM

Keynote 6: Panel Presentation - Senior Leadership and the Changing World of Emergency Management

Panel Moderator - Jay Shaw, Deputy Chief of Safety, Emergency Management and Public Information, Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service

Jay Shaw will host a panel of Senior Elected Officials from the Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments to discuss the challenges and changes that are happening in the field of Emergency Management. This session will discuss leadership, decision making and the effect ongoing emergencies are having on our Province. Session will allow for Q&A from the audience.

2:15–2:45PM

Conference Closing Remarks



**MANITOBA
DISASTER
MANAGEMENT
CONFERENCE**

Cost per delegate: \$550 CAD

Deadline: January 9, 2026

Send completed registration form with payment to:
Manitoba Disaster Management Conference
PO Box 70044 Kenaston PO
Winnipeg MB R3P 0X6

Registration Form

PERSONAL INFORMATION

FIRST NAME		LAST NAME
ORGANIZATION		ADDRESS
CITY	PROVINCE/STATE	POSTAL/ZIP CODE
PHONE NUMBER	FAX NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS

SESSION PREFERENCES (SELECT ONE SESSION PER CATEGORY)

BREAKOUT SESSIONS B

- ☐ B1: The Changing World of Emergency Management
- ☐ B2: From Crisis to Coordination: Manitoba Hydro's 2025 Wildfire Season Response
- ☐ B3: AlertMB: An Overview of the National Public Alerting System in Manitoba
- ☐ B4: Animal-Assisted Crisis Response - A New DM Resource

WORKSHOP SESSIONS W

- ☐ W1: From Chaos to Coordination: Turning Generosity into Impact
- ☐ W2: ICS - - - - EOC: Joined by a dotted line!
- ☐ W3: From Rubble to Resilience: Short and Long-Term Recovery Strategies After a Tornado
- ☐ W4: Recovery Trends and Challenges: Anticipating Long-Term Community Needs

BREAKOUT SESSIONS C

- ☐ C1: Boost Your Battery: Reframing Resilience: Run Toward the Roar — Stay Charged, Lead Well, and Finish Well
- ☐ C2: Strengthening Accessibility in Emergency Management and Risk Communication Systems
- ☐ C3: Stronger Together: The Power of Recreation in Emergencies
- ☐ C4: Southern Chief's Organization Panel on 2025 Wildfires

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