



shift »»

Gearing up.
Surging forward.



ANNUAL REPORT 2010

Serving member agents since 1994



Association of Alberta
REGISTRY AGENTS

www.aara.ca

Registry agents >> entrepreneurs committed to expanding their product lines, to embracing new technologies, to promoting strategic alliances, to being flexible and nimble in adapting to the needs of Albertans.

Registry agents >> a dynamic group of businesses charged with the task of providing service to Albertans on behalf of the Government of Alberta.

Registry agents >> open for business. Give us a call!

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



As I took over the Presidency last June, I inherited an association that was embarking on a new course of action. Since then, we have worked diligently to foster a new level of understanding with our partners in the registry agent business, Service Alberta and Alberta Motor Association. We have opened the doors for new partnerships with agencies such as Alberta Health and Wellness.

At last year's annual meeting, we heard clearly the message from registry agents. You told us you were eager to expand beyond the initial pilot phase of the Albert Health Care Insurance Transactions program. You wanted all registry locations to be able to provide these services to Albertans.

Early in 2011 we were successful in developing that model with the support of both Service Alberta and Alberta Health and Wellness. Today, we are in the process of rolling out the new model. Based on this success, we want to get the message out to others that registry agents are open for new business and will work collaboratively with partners in response to their requirements.

In October 2010 representatives from the Association of Alberta Registry Agents along with other key stakeholders took part in a meeting called *Synte-gration*. Under the leadership of Minister Heather Klimchuk, Service Alberta took the initiative and convened a diverse group of stakeholders. Together, we spent the best part of three working days reviewing every aspect of the registry business. Spirited discussions took place. Traditionally held ideas and beliefs were challenged. What resulted was a plan to modernize our approach while keeping what's best for Albertans at the forefront.

As always, the success of AARA is directly dependent on the volunteers who support the association. I want to acknowledge the commitment of the members of the AARA Board of Directors who have invested freely of their time to move our industry forward. In addition, I want to thank the volunteers who have been called upon to undertake special assignments such as reviewing our education materials, sitting on working committees, developing new policy and business practices or supporting our work in a multitude of other ways. These contributions are gratefully acknowledged. I also offer my wholehearted thank you to the staff of the association for their dedication, insights and skills that support the efforts of the volunteers.

Terry Alston, President

“Change is never easy. It takes careful planning to balance risk and reward. It takes commitment to open and frequent communication. It takes a ‘can do’ attitude. It takes time to build momentum. And it takes relationship building because we know it is people that make things happen. The year 2010 and the start of 2011 have been focused on change.”

CEO'S MESSAGE

If we had to choose one word to sum up 2010 it would be ‘strategic’. Faced with a slow recovery from a recession and reduced government staffing, registry agents had to take a hard look at the resources at their disposal and make some difficult decisions about where to get the best returns from those resources.

Step one was to build stronger relationships with other stakeholders in the registry agent network. With our partners, Service Alberta and the Alberta Motor Association, we re-examined our roles. We held numerous meetings, participated in lengthy discussions and ultimately formed a common understanding, which we formalized in a *Statement of Philosophy*, signed by all parties.

We also assumed the mission of increasing awareness and understanding of our industry. It had become increasingly apparent that key decision makers were not fully cognizant of the role registry agents played in their communities or of the intricacies and nuances of the registry business model. Early in 2010 agents took their message to their elected representatives and others to reinforce the value that the registry agent network has provided and continues to provide to Albertans.

We applied the same strategic thinking internally as well. Registry agents are supported by their association, the Association of Alberta Registry Agents (AARA), as well as two organizations owned and controlled by AARA. These two organizations are Registry Connect (RC), a foundation, and Registry Connect Limited Partnership (RCLP), a for-profit enterprise. When these three organizations are working in harmony, the registry agent network has incredible flexibility in addressing issues and capturing opportunities.

For RC, the primary focus was the ongoing development of the Skills and Training for Registry Agents (STAR) program. The online portal at www.aaratraining.ca delivers education programs to agents all over the province at any time of the day or night. Agents who once had to travel to Edmonton or Calgary for courses can now access learning modules from the convenience of their own communities.

Recently, AARA reached an agreement with Service Alberta that enabled us to provide training while leaving the examination and certification of students to SA. We also anticipate the exams themselves will become easier to access. SA will soon enable students to take their exams in proctored locations throughout the province. These developments are exciting for us.

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“The activities of the past year have set us up with a stable foundation from which to move forward.”

By managing contracts it has in place with the Government of Alberta, Registry Connect can improve access to quality training and generate funds to reinvest in the registry agent network.

RCLP had quite a different focus for 2010. Leveraging its investments in a military-grade data centre that could support online transactions in a high security environment, RCLP launched its first commercial venture. Alberta Virtual Vault is a virtual storage option for Albertans who want a safe place to keep important items such as land titles, wills, personal directives and the like.

Owners of virtual vaults gain secure, unlimited access to their files; they can view, add, amend or delete information at any time, from any computer with internet access. What sets Alberta Virtual Vaults apart from other online storage options is the high security provided by our data centre, and the fact that it is backed by the identity verification expertise of the registry network. In the event that an owner loses their login information, or meets with a life-altering event such as natural disaster or death, registry agents can verify the facts and perform face-to-face identity confirmations of those charged with managing the individual's affairs.

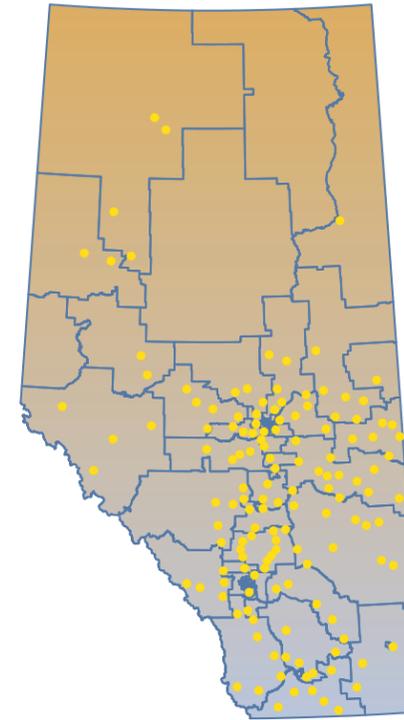
The activities of the past year have set us up with a stable foundation from which to move forward. Operating from our new offices in Edmonton, we're supported by a strong staff with diverse skills. We have developed strategic relationships with consultants and businesses throughout the province. We have adopted a business frame of mind. We have room to grow.

Moving forward in 2011, our goal is to continue our strategic focus and nurture new business opportunities, not only for registry agents at the local level, but also on a larger scale for our broader membership. If 2010 taught us anything, it's that tasks that might be insurmountable for one registry working alone can often be accomplished by a group of like-minded entrepreneurs working together.



Pamela Wilson, CEO

“ If 2010 taught us anything, it's that tasks that might be insurmountable for one registry working alone can often be accomplished by a group of like-minded entrepreneurs working together. ”



There are 228 agents located throughout the province of Alberta.

The Value of the Registry Agent Network

Is the Registry Agent Network the right fit for your business opportunity? We offer:

- » Geographical reach into more than 150 communities across the province
- » Physical storefronts that comply with the Government of Alberta security requirements
- » Well-trained frontline staff that make customer service a top priority
- » Rigorously screened staff, including police information checks on every individual, even registry shareholders
- » Expertise in identity verification including scrutinizing the authenticity of documents provided to support identity
- » A business that is accustomed to meticulous record keeping and inventory control
- » A military-grade data centre offering a secure online delivery channel for goods and services
- » An industry keen to expand their goods and services offering through partnerships with government and the private sector
- » A group of entrepreneurs who genuinely care about the wellbeing of the communities in which they live and do business
- » A privatized business model that has been the envy of other North American jurisdictions since 1994

If you have a business opportunity that we should explore, contact us today.

Registry agents » a dynamic group of businesses charged with providing service to Albertans on behalf of the Government of Alberta.

Registries Build Strong Communities

“ At AARA, we know it’s not only the local hockey teams or the high school graduation committees that need our help; it is also the Albertans who have become marginalized, often through no fault of their own.

Registry agents are entrepreneurs who are committed to the wellbeing of the communities they in which they live and serve. Present in 144 cities and towns throughout the province, these business owners know the power of mobilizing people and focusing their energy to make our province a better place to live. Although it is impossible to list all the ways that individual agents support local initiatives, two key initiatives supporting the food bank and the homeless identity project are worth sharing.

Registries Support Foodbanks

Spearheaded in Calgary, the foodbank program was quickly adopted in Edmonton and is rapidly spreading to other communities. The program is simple. Agents began collecting funds at the front counter. It started with one registry, but when word of their success got out, nearby registries quickly jumped on board to serve those Albertans who are disadvantaged. To date, the major municipalities alone have raised more than \$72,000 for foodbanks in the province.



Registries Assist with ID Process

In May 2010 the AARA worked with Alberta Housing and Social Development and the Homeward Trust to help Edmonton’s homeless understand how to get an identity card. Proof of identity is an important precursor to accessing many additional services that can break the cycle of hopelessness and poverty.

We know that registries could not survive and thrive without the support of our communities. We also know that with our success comes the obligation and responsibility to help others. In 2011 we will continue to work with Edmonton social service agencies and have already begun working with similar agencies in other cities to do our part to help society’s disadvantaged.



Alberta
Virtual Vault
www.albertavirtualvault.ca

After two years of research, design and development discussions, Alberta Virtual Vault was launched into Alberta registry offices in mid-August of 2010. Working with a business advisory group consisting of registry agents, administrative staff and representation from Alberta’s legal community this web-based service was rolled out of Registry Connect Limited Partnership’s data centre in two phases.

The first phase involved the soft launch of the service, with the goal of familiarizing registry agents with the product. Each office received a designated number of free Alberta Virtual Vaults, thereby giving registry office staff the opportunity to experiment with and discover the product features and selling points at no cost to their operations. A number of onsite training sessions were also held at Calgary and Edmonton office locations, and each office received professionally-produced promotional materials.

Following the six-week familiarization period, the hard launch was kicked off with an intense two-month marketing program. The marketing efforts featured province-wide radio, print and online media campaigns aimed at making Albertans aged 35 – 55 aware of the product. The program successfully created awareness of the new service, but to date that awareness has not translated into sales number originally projected

We bolstered the hard launch by providing sales tips and promotional ideas in our newsletters. We also developed an online training guide for agents and continue to provide product support through our Alberta Virtual Vault Special Handling Unit.

Going forward, we’re exploring new marketing channels. In May, Registry Connect contracted a sales consultant to work with key influencers in the legal, financial and estate management industries to prospect opportunities for enhanced sales. We are also exploring the option of a direct online service that would be available across the country. All in all, it’s shaping up to be an exciting year for Alberta Virtual Vault.

Registry agents »

flexible and nimble in adapting to the needs of Albertans.

2010 BY THE NUMBERS

Land Title (searches)

237,727

Corporate Registry

(searches and registrations)

462,681

Vital Statistics

(registrations)

180,553

Motor Vehicles

(searches and registrations)

6,900,108

Personal Property

(searches and registrations)

359,421

Total

8,140,490

For Internet Fines

Site Visits

19,2543

of Payments

16,6585

of overdue

27,903

RISE

System Use

62,629

Transactions Completed

35,492

Mail-In Tabs Issued

22,044

Registry Agents Strike an Agreement to Provide Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan Enrolments

As 2010 drew to a close, the AARA, Alberta Health and Wellness (AHW) and Service Alberta (SA) arrived at an agreement whereby all registry agents could begin to process Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan (AHCIP) transactions. The agreement was about providing Albertans with better options.

Now Albertans have the convenient option of stopping by their local registry to enroll for health care benefits or update contact information – all at no charge. The face-to-face option is particularly beneficial for new Canadians, who are often unfamiliar with the process and operating in their second language. Registry staff provide a personal touch and strive to work with new Canadians to address any language-related challenges.

The arrangement offers other benefits too. Registry agents excel at face-to-face identity verification. Tapping into this expertise is expected to minimize fraudulent applications for health benefits in the province, an outcome that should ultimately help the province manage health care costs.

The initiative began about two years ago with a pilot program of 17 registries of varying sizes and locations. Based on the success of the pilot, the project has been extended. Rollout of new registry participants began in April 2011 with additional outlets added over the summer. Now Alberta residents can access the same services no matter their choice of location.

Best of all, it's not a one-size-fits-all arrangement that has been imposed on registry owners. All agents have the option, but not the requirement, of getting involved. Agents can also choose the service delivery model that best fits their particular business.

Much of what made the program so successful was the collaborative commitment to establishing the right infrastructure. In order for the transactions to be securely and cost effectively processed, it was vital to establish rigorous training and certification programs. To this end, the AARA added customized online training courses to its training portal www.aaratraining.com. SA worked diligently to create convenient examination locations where staff could obtain certification by successfully passing an exam.

When industry and government work together, the result is a more satisfying and effective experience for all Albertans. Another Registry Agent Network success story.



Skills and Training for Alberta Registries

At AARA, we know that education and training of personnel is important because it:

- » Creates a pool of readily available and appropriately trained replacements for personnel who may leave or move up in the organization
- » Enhances a registry agency's ability to adopt and use advances in technology because of sufficiently knowledgeable staff
- » Builds a more efficient, effective and motivated team that enhances the company's competitive position and improves employee morale.
- » Ensures adequate human resource for expansion into new programs.

In addition, research has shown specific benefits that a small business receives from training and developing its employees including:

- » Increased productivity
- » Improved efficiency resulting in financial gains
- » Decreased need for supervision

To support our learning strategy, we have developed a flexible, customized online training portal www.aaratraining.com to serve the registry agent community. In 2010 we added a number of new modules. Perhaps most significantly, we were able to refine the training created by Alberta Health and Wellness and reformat it for the internet. The new course blended with the other STAR courses in its use of intuitive navigation, learner prompts and user interface. Learners now have 24/7 access to the material from any workstation with internet access.

As part of our education planning process, AARA created the Alberta Registry Skill Profile, which identifies every skill set required by a registry. Some of the skills, such as bookkeeping, are widely available in the community, while others are very specialized. AARA has no desire to recreate courses for those broadly available skills. Instead we direct students to reputable training providers. Our focus is on the specialized skills.

AARA is well on its way to creating a registry agent 'university'. We've developed on-line learning modules for those interested in working in a registry. The modules make it easier to attract and prepare new employees. We've also created a Quick Start module so individuals with little or no registry experience can quickly learn transactions that do not require certification. The sooner a new employee can start processing transactions, the sooner he or she starts contributing to the financial well-being of the registry. Once that new employee is contributing the bottom line, the registry owner can invest in additional training and certification.

Establishing a secure, reliable registry network requires a solid foundation, a foundation built on a knowledgeable, well-educated workforce. AARA has taken the leadership role in this regard.

Access the following courses at www.aaratraining.com:

- Supervisor Training
 - Customer Service
 - AMVIR
 - SPIN 2
 - MOVES Supervisor
 - Alberta Virtual Vault Training
 - CORES Level 1
 - APPRES Registry Agents
 - APPRES Registries On Line
 - Basic Certificate Lesson 1: The Role of the Registry Agent
 - Basic Certificate Lesson 2: Privacy Legislation
 - Basic Certificate Lesson 3: MOVES Client Services
 - Basic Certificate Lesson 4: MOVES Operator
 - Basic Certificate Lesson 5: MOVES Operator Services
 - Basic Certificate Lesson 6: MOVES Graduated Driver Licensing
 - Basic Certificate Lesson 7: MOVES Vehicle Registration
 - Basic Certificate Lesson 8: MOVES Commercial Vehicle Registration
 - Basic Certificate Lesson 9: Vital Statistics Services
 - Basic Certificate Lesson 10: APPRES and PPR
 - Basic Certificate Lesson 11: CORES Search Services
 - Basic Certificate Lesson 12: SPIN 2 Search Services
 - Quick Start
 - Alberta Health Care Insurance Plan Training
- Coming soon:
- CORES Levels 2 and 3



2010 Board of Directors

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
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| Past President | Mark Zemp |
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| President Elect | Michael Kuzek |
| Calgary | Kim L'Hirondelle Kevin Hamilton |
| Central | Matt Toonders Alex Weber |
| Edmonton | Sabrina Dhalla Barry Verbin |
| North | Ken Landry Debbie Obridgewitch |
| South | Lori Boychuk Alaina Wells |
| East | Dave McNeill Karen Weder |

AARA Executive Team

Chief Executive Officer

Pamela Wilson

Executive Director, Commercial Operations

Owen Voaklander

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Into Overdrive

Gears

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Strategy



« finds »

Registry agents »

Open for business.
Give us a call!