

Western Manitoba MB30 Annual Branch Report

This report is usually a summary of the branch's activities over the past year. I will get to that, but first, because this is a "Recruitment Event", I want to share some aspects of the Association.

The Head office is in Ottawa, there are 28 staff members. They have their own office building. They worked from home during the pandemic and as of January 2023 they are getting back into their offices. Of your membership fees, 80% is retained by the National Office and branches receive their 20% through quarterly installments.

There are 78 Branches across Canada. Divided among 6 districts. Western Manitoba Branch belongs to the Prairie District (Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, and one branch in NWT) and consists of **17 branches**.

As of Feb 2023, we have approx. 167,945 members.

We are a non-profit organization, which controls what we can spend and how much direct benefits we can offer to our members. The only donation we are allowed to make is to the poppy fund through the Canadian legion branch. Thus, we purchase or donate toward wreaths at Legions within our branch area for their Remembrance Day Services.

The year we saw a new National President Roy Goodall who was previously vice -president. Roy Goodall served in the Canadian Armed Forces for 38 years, retiring with the rank of Major. A new vice-president was elected in Sept. 2022 Helene Nadeau who has 32 years with the Public Service

There is a return to Pre-Retirement Workshops virtually. It is a different approach as there is a \$100 fee. However, included is:

- a year's membership with Federal Retirees
- a personal financial assessment offered by Tradex
- and a complimentary 20-minute appointment with a consultant about the process of transitioning from federal public service employee to pensioner.

The sessions are limited to 40 attendees and so far, they have been successful.

Our younger retirees want more on-line communication. We see more work from home opportunities and government buildings offices are closing. People want to seek their information on-line and will do their prepare applications and seek answers via the internet.

The Branch Activities Over the Past Year

Branch Core Functions

- Advocacy
- Membership Recruitment and Engagement
- Member Support
- Information Sharing
- Volunteer Support and Development
- Financial Management
- Governance

The Core functions are the areas where we plan our spending. We are accountable to our membership and to the National Board of Directors. The plans for spending money to support these functions are identified in the budget and in the reserves template, which will be presented.

We are ALWAYS looking for volunteers. We have adopted the message that any Involvement with the branch would be appreciated and communicate the idea of a member being a "Friend of the Board" and helping from time to time. You have an opportunity to test the waters first. The Board needs help with social media – we do have a Facebook page; updates to our webpage; keeping track of our membership and the changes; Sage magazine branch and memoriam updates and help with Veterans' Week activities.

All branches are currently having difficulties securing volunteers. Our members are aging. Suggestions among branch volunteers are that we may consider offering more branch social activities, and scheduling meetings at different times. We are open to any suggestions.

Regarding volunteers, I have a brochure entitled "Aging Well Together" which is a national movement. It lists senior organizations in Manitoba that are concerned with social isolation of older adults. They have opportunities for volunteers including Manitoba 55+ games (which is in Portage La Prairie this June 20 - 24) and community outreach, even offering on-line courses, book clubs etc. Never has there been so many programs and activities for seniors.

Today our branch membership is 753. Less than half or approx. 335 members live in Brandon area.

We continued, in the past year to respond to requests for "You and Your Survivor workbooks". These workbooks are available to download, <https://www.federalretirees.ca/sites/default/files/2020-03/survivors-en-final.pdf>. you may want to only download the fillable sections and print them off so you will have them with your will. A blank printed workbook will be available for \$10 from the National Office.

Veteran's Week: Our Branch members attended and presented wreaths at Remembrance Day services in Brandon, Killarney, Erickson, Minnedosa and Dauphin.

Last September, at the district conference, a presentation was made on Agism. There is a commitment from National Office to tackle "Agism." The definition of Agism is "a prejudice and discrimination against people based on their age". As retired people, we need to raise public awareness about its existence and dispel common stereotypes and misunderstandings about aging. The assumption that all older people are frail and helpless is a common, incorrect stereotype. Quite often, we as retirees contribute to this stereotype when we joke about our creaking bones, our forgetfulness. We are asking you to be aware of when we make comments like this or contribute to this discrimination by buying birthday cards, over the hill, etc.

The holiday season was busy with planning our own branch's Holiday greetings in the annual EBlast and newspaper advertisements. We placed "Season greetings" in 4 community newspapers: Minnedosa Tribune, Shilo Stag, South Mountain Press, including Crossroads (Hamiota, Shoal Lake, Russell) and Boissevain. Totals for the H/G ads were \$760. These are Member Awareness adverts - our members need to know that we are still.

As of July 2023, Canada Life will be taking over the administration of our Public Service Health Care Plan (PSHC). We will move from Sun Life to Canada Life. Most of us have received and completed the positive enrolment for the Public Service Health Care Plan and created your member services account through My Canada Life at Work. Wallet cards can be printed off using the settings on the page and your printer. Dental coverage will, for the time being, remain with Sun Life, although the federal government has started a competitive bid process for all employee and retiree dental plans.

The Manitoba election is scheduled for Oct 3, and the board has been discussing holding a town hall that will allow members to question candidates. Last time we partnered with seniors for seniors, and it was a successful event.

We will have that branch 40th association 60th Anniversary party, complete with dinner and entertainment tentatively scheduled for early October. Brad Kelso has agreed to chair an organizing committee. More information to follow by eblast. Eblast is our main source of communication with members, other than the bulletin in Sage. Please contact Brad if you want to be part of the planning committee.

I want to make mention of our Preferred Partners, please familiarize yourself with their offers. They are all listed on the National Website. Special mention of a Preferred Partner of the Winnipeg branch that includes Shaftsbury, Sturgeon Creek, River Ridge, and Victoria landing Senior residences. They offer a month's free rent following one year's residency.

In closing, thanks to my board of directors for their support and guidance. I have enjoyed our comradery and consider them friends. And we are all continuing to stay on the board, so we must be having fun.

Wendy Jarvin, President