

BRANCH REPORT

AB16 | Calgary & District

CONTACT US

Room 302
Kerby Centre
1133, 7th Avenue SW
Calgary, Alberta
T2P 1B2
403-265-0773
calgarybranch@federalretirees.ca
federalretirees.ca/calgary

President:

Roloin Vetsch

Vice-President:

John Bakator

Secretary:

Carr McLeod

Treasurer:

Paula Fuerst

Directors:

Ron Beirnes
Sandra Laye
Bonnie Pratt
Anne Prusakowski
Gabrielle Simpson
Bob Woods

Past President:

Pat Henderson

President's message

Welcome to another issue of Sage and our Branch Report. I hope my message finds you in good health and that you look forward to the opportunities 2024 brings.

As I reflect on the accomplishments of your local board and our dedicated volunteers, the team recognizes there is still much to be done. Our branch's upcoming annual meeting is scheduled for April 2024, at which time I'll provide a detailed report of activities from April 2023 to March 2024. Details of the annual meeting are included elsewhere in the report.

Our Board Development Committee has capably refined the year-round process for our branch's board development plan. The committee leads have been Valerie Katarey and Gerry Thompson. The plan includes activities such as:

- Needs assessment and role definitions
- Recruiting campaign
- Identifying nominees for annual branch elections/appointments
- Delivery of board orientation
- Board members' training and development
- Exit interviews and knowledge transfer

The branch's Finance and Operational Planning Committee has also been active and is now under the leadership of Carr McLeod. Already busy as our branch secretary, Carr has been instrumental in refining objectives and expected results in our local operational plan. See a detailed overview elsewhere in this report.

PARTNER BANNER

As for local activities, we continue experimenting with new ways of engaging our members.

- Bonnie Pratt, our local advocacy director, hosted an in-person “Coffee at Kerby” session in December. See the “Advocacy Update” in this report for further details.
- Following the success of local meetings with members in Airdrie and Cochrane, our advocacy director attended a Christmas event hosted by the Calgary branch of the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC). Several directors also spoke at a Customs and Border Services Agency (CBSA) retirees’ luncheon. At both events, we provided information about our association and the benefits of membership. Thanks to the organizers for the invitations!
- John Bakator, our branch vice president, is developing the framework for an editorial panel. This panel will identify members who can assist various directors and the board with initiatives or activities.
- Sandra Laye, our IT support and member services director, has been busy reviewing and documenting systems such as our phone services, technology for virtual meetings, and information security.

Activities and planning for the upcoming quarter include:

- Organization of our annual branch meeting, including election of new board members and financial reporting
- Preparing for the transition of board duties after April 2024, including orientation and training
- Planning for our branch’s 60th anniversary event, tentatively scheduled for September 2024.
- Development of an electronic record-keeping system for branch information
- Identifying and providing training to local volunteers

There is much to do, and we rely on volunteers to run our branch and deliver member services. Please consider volunteering, whether it be for a few hours, to assist with a project, or to serve as a board member. For further information, please contact the branch office.

“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” – Helen Keller



Respectfully,

Roloin Vetsch
Branch President

Calgary and District (C&D) Branch Operational Plan

The Branch has put considerable effort into developing a new Operational Plan. The methodology is based on a simple goal-setting approach known as OKRs, standing for Objectives and Key Results. See www.whatmatters.com for more information.

The essence of this planning system is to clearly state WHAT the Branch plans to accomplish (The Objectives) and HOW they will do this (The Key Results). Objectives are expected to be Significant, Action-Oriented, Concrete, and Inspirational. Key Results must be Specific and Time-Bound, Aggressive but Realistic, Measurable and Verifiable.

With these definitions in mind, a committee refined the existing plan while ensuring that the goals of the National Strategic Plan were met. The Branch Board approved the 2024 plan in January 2024. The financing of the plan is being finalized.

A summary of the plan (showing Objectives only) follows:

1. Advocacy
 - a. Meet National Office Federal Objectives
 - b. Local MLAs are made aware of NAFR Provincial Priorities
 - c. Develop and Access Advocacy Resources from within Branch Members
2. Membership Information Sharing
 - a. All Branch Members are aware of and have input into Branch activities and Priorities – Part 1 Create a Plan
 - b. All Branch Members are aware of and have input into Branch activities and Priorities – Part 2 Implement the Plan
3. Membership Recruitment and Retention
 - a. Branch Membership increased by 5% by June 2024 and 10% by Dec 2024
 - b. Hold Events to Encourage target audiences to become Members
 - c. Current Employees are Informed of NAFR
4. Veterans
 - a. Ascertain what C&D Branch Veterans want and need in their retirement
5. Organizational Excellence
 - a. Board members are recruited and acquire the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities needed to meet their roles.
 - b. Branch Financial Management capacity is strengthened.
 - c. Digital and Physical file management systems are developed.
 - d. The branch webpage is modern, attractive, user-friendly, and current.
 - e. Events are Planned and Executed Efficiently

Advocacy Update

The Calgary & District Branch recognizes that our catchment area covers a significant portion of Southern Alberta, and we acknowledge that our members live in numerous towns and rural areas. For that reason, your Branch has held, and plans to continue to hold, Meet & Greet events in various towns to provide an opportunity to meet with and speak to members who might not otherwise get an opportunity to meet their board members. We have already enjoyed two successful events in Airdrie and Cochrane. Because visiting towns involves travel, we plan to host Meet & Greets in travel friendly months. As we schedule future sessions, we plan to alert members via e-blast messages and our social media channels. We may also call members in the towns identified to discuss and inform them of an upcoming event.

We hosted the inaugural “Coffee at Kerby” on December 6, 2023, at our association office in downtown Calgary. Meeting over coffee and snacks is an effective way to network in a relaxed, informal atmosphere. It was a pleasant experience for the director who hosted and the engaged members who attended. And it wasn’t just relaxing. We asked for members’ input and ideas. Several useful suggestions came out of the meeting, and these were forwarded to the Branch board for consideration. Due to scheduling issues, the next session is proposed for late March 2024. Depending on attendance, venues other than our Kerby office will be considered as well.

Branch Annual Meeting 2024 – Save the Date

Date: April 19, 2024

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:00PM

Location: Hotel Blackfoot, 5940 Blackfoot Trail SE

Please check our branch website for additional details, such as the nomination process for upcoming board vacancies.

We have also posted information on the responsibilities associated with various roles on the board.

Staying in Touch

We strive to provide our members with current information via various channels, either by mail or electronically. The Sage publication is only produced quarterly, and due to printing timelines, local reports must be submitted 2 months prior to publication/distribution dates. Facebook and Instagram pages are available for both the national association and our branch. Frequently, emails are sent to members with information about events and topics such as health care or preferred partners.

We encourage you to update your membership file using the following link share your email address:
federalretirees.ca/email-capture



Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) Centennial 2024

The RCAF is celebrating 100 years since it became a permanent component of Canada’s defence force. Celebrations are planned throughout the year, with more details on the centennial on the [Royal Canadian Air Force Centennial website](#).

Local activities are planned in Calgary to mark the centennial. On April 1st, ceremonies will take place at the Military Museums, 4520 Crowchild Trail SW. There will be exhibits in The Founders Gallery, several dignitaries will be present, and the local Air Cadets Squadron will participate. A display of the Great Escape will be featured, as it is the 80th anniversary of the event where 76 Allied airmen escaped from a Nazi POW camp. You will also have a chance to view a Gypsy Moth model designed and built by Mr. Clark Seaborn.

Other activities in the works are participation in the Stampede Parade and a display honouring our Canadian Military at the Spruce Meadows North American Tournament.

2023 Remembrance Day services at Peacekeeper Park



*Roy Goodall, National President
& Roloin Vetsch, Branch President*



Gabrielle and Sam Simpson

Gabrielle helped in organizing this event.

There is also an annual memorial service held in August each year at this location.

For Your Information:



Remember, 2024 is the 60th anniversary of the Calgary & District Branch and we will be celebrating that milestone, so if you have ideas or submissions to help us all celebrate, let us know by emailing us at: calgarybranch@federalretirees.ca

Tax time and How to Get Your Medical Expense Details

If you will be claiming medical expenses incurred in the 2023 taxation year, you can still obtain details about items claimed when we were covered by Sun Life (January 1 – June 30, 2023). This excerpt from the PSHCP Bulletin 46, dated June 5, 2023, provides instructions on how to obtain the information from Sun Life.

- **Individual Claim Statements will remain available to you for 18 months from the date of adjudication. The Sun Life PSHCP Member Services website will be decommissioned September 30, 2023. However, you will still have access to your information through the generic Sun Life website until December 31, 2024, by signing in to www.mysunlife.ca and navigating to “Benefits centre”, then to “Claims”, and selecting “my claims”.**
-
- **Sun Life Call Centre support will remain available until December 31, 2024, for website and mobile app technical issues, like User ID and password resets. To speak to a Sun Life representative, call the Call Centre at 1-888-757-7427 (toll free from anywhere in North America) or 613-247-5100 (in the National Capital Region), Monday to Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET.**

Additional news and bulletins can be found on the website for the [Public Service Health Care Plan Administration Authority](#).

Federal Retirees Members Information

National : <https://www.federalretirees.ca/>

Calgary & District: <https://federalretirees.ca/calgary>

Facebook - [National Association of Federal Retirees - Calgary YYC](#)

For questions or inquiries, please phone 403-265-0773 or email calgarybranch@federalretirees.ca