

Municipal leaders look at financial challenges

Municipal councils are planning to look at different ways they can change their funding to make their operations sustainable, Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador President Graham Letto says.

The board of directors for the association met this past weekend in St. Anthony to prepare the agenda for their convention in October.

"Water, sewer, street: these are the basic services that municipalities provide to their residents," Letto says.

"Right now, when you've still got 200 boil orders in this province, it always comes to mind that municipalities don't have the necessary resources they need in order to address those issues," he says.

The Community Co-operation Resource Centre is in the

process of helping town councils do sustainability self-assessments. The project is part of creating integrated community sustainability plans across the province, as a requirement for the federal/provincial Gas Tax Agreement.

Letto says many smaller municipalities are also struggling with following the occupational health and safety guidelines for its volunteer firefighters.

He says a large number of firefighters requires an occupational health and safety council that is bigger than most municipalities' entire staff.

"Protecting firefighters is a paramount concern," Letto said in a news release, "but small municipalities do not have the administrative capacity to take this on — a new way to manage it needs to be found."