

2025-2026 E.A. Danby Award Recipients

Named after AMCTO's inaugural President, the E.A. Danby Awards recognize and honour municipalities that have demonstrated outstanding achievement through innovation with respect to municipal management activities or practices. The E.A. Danby Awards focus on the three broad categories of municipal finance, municipal administration, and the implementation of legislation, across municipalities of greater than 20,000 residents, and less than 20,000 residents. Recipients of this award have demonstrated tangible results related to the efficiency and effectiveness of the municipal corporation.

Municipalities of 20,000 or more:

Town of Collingwood

Category: Municipal Administration

Project: Short-term Accommodation Licensing and Modernization Initiative

The Town of Collingwood's Short-Term Accommodation (STA) Licensing & Modernization Initiative represents a transformational and community-driven approach to municipal policy development, delivering significant and measurable improvements in how STAs are managed within the community.

Through this initiative, STA activity has decreased from over 400 identified units to 87 active units, including 31 licensed STAs, while long-term rental listings on rental platforms have increased from 53 to 236, indicating a return of housing supply to the long-term market. The STA Licensing Bylaw has also contributed to improved compliance, with complaints related to STAs decreasing substantially following implementation, from a peak of 83 in 2023 to 35 in 2024 and 40 in 2025.

These outcomes were achieved through a deliberate, multi-year policy development process, designed to address the rapid growth of STAs and their impact on long-term housing availability, neighbourhood character, and municipal enforcement.

The Town undertook a structured approach that brought both council and the community along at each phase, ensuring that policy direction was informed, transparent, and broadly supported. Grounded in data analysis, extensive public consultation, a series of iterative staff reports and council discussions and decisions, the Town developed a shared understanding of the issue, evaluated regulatory options, and built alignment around a balanced and sustainable framework for STAs.

This work culminated in the implementation of a staged licensing framework, including the enactment of two licensing bylaws that aligned regulatory tools with planning policy and community priorities while balancing the needs of residents, property owners, and the local tourism economy.

By transitioning from an ineffective prohibition model to a proactive, evidence-based licensing system, the Town has strengthened service delivery, improved community outcomes, and established a replicable model for municipalities across Ontario grounded in deliberate and inclusive policy development.

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

Category: Municipal Administration

Project: Modernizing Service Requests

The Service Request Modernization (SRM) project is an innovative, in-house solution built by Stouffville, for Stouffville using existing technology investments. Despite the Town not having a CRM, CMMS or capital funding, staff managed to leverage their own skills and expertise to design, develop and deploy a new platform that transforms how residents connect with the Town to submit requests and access municipal services.

As the Town grew, legacy systems could no longer meet evolving needs. Instead of investing in costly new platforms, staff reimagined existing resources to create a modern, web-based solution that improves service delivery and enhances residents' experience.

The platform includes applications accessible to staff both in the office and in the field, enabling greater efficiency. Staff also created a public-facing tool to allow residents to submit service requests anytime, from anywhere. Since implementation, the system has reduced the average case closure time by six days (38%) and enabled real-time citizen feedback.

What makes the SRM innovative is that it was conceived, designed and built entirely by staff without new funding and through collaboration across every commission. Through 'outside-the-box' thinking, Town staff delivered a resident-focused solution that modernizes service delivery and improves how the community connects with municipal services.

Municipalities of less than 20,000:

City of Kenora

Category: Municipal Administration

Project: Modernizing Public Transit for Kenora

Launched in late 2024, The Wave is the City of Kenora's on-demand public transit service, designed to replace fixed-route buses with a more flexible, reliable, and accessible system. Riders can book trips through The Wave mobile app or by phone, and the service dynamically groups passengers traveling in similar directions to keep trips efficient and affordable. 2025 marked The Wave's first full year of operation, and the results show strong growth and high rider satisfaction. Over the year, The Wave completed almost 50,000 trips, with ridership increasing throughout the year as several service adjustments were made. Completing almost six trips per hour, The Wave is among the most efficient demand-responsive transit services in Canada. Riders consistently rated their experience highly, with an average rating of 4.9 out of 5 stars.

As demand grew, the service maintained a met demand rate of 90%, meaning the vast majority of ride requests were successfully fulfilled. Average pickup times in 2025 were approximately 26 minutes, balancing reliability with the flexibility of shared, on-demand service. Accessibility continues to be a cornerstone of The Wave. Wheelchair-accessible vehicles are fully integrated into the fleet, and drivers receive specialized accessibility and safety training, including securement procedures and customer-service best practices. For many residents, The Wave is essential - surveys show that 77% of riders do not have access to a personal vehicle, and 35%

report traveling more often since the service launched.

With more than 14,000 rider accounts created to date and monthly ridership roughly three times higher than the previous transit system, The Wave has become a core part of Kenora's transportation network. As the City looks ahead, The Wave will continue to evolve to support safe, inclusive, and efficient mobility for residents and visitors alike.

Certificate of Merit - Municipalities of 20,000 or more:

United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry

Category: Municipal Administration

Project: Emergency Collaboration in the Exercise Trillium Response

Exercise Trillium Response demonstrated the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry's innovative, operations-focused approach to emergency management by rigorously testing real procedures under sustained, escalating pressure. Over three days, participants confronted severe winter conditions, including blinding snow and freezing rain, followed by a simulated train derailment in South Dundas involving a hazardous chemical release. The compound scenario was designed to force rapid prioritization, disciplined documentation, and effective operational hand-offs between shifts.

Teams conducted targeted evacuations—including by snowmobile where roads were impassable—while managing transportation disruptions and maintaining operational security. Participants delivered timely public information updates, tracked resources, and followed emergency operation centre protocols to ensure decisions were recorded and transferred as personnel rotated shifts.

As local capacity was deliberately stressed, municipal officials followed established escalation pathways to request external support. This led to the deployment of 150 Canadian Armed Forces members to the Cornwall Armoury, where military personnel integrated with municipal operations and logistics. The exercise validated SDG Counties' Request for Assistance processes and confirmed surge capacity for sheltering, transportation, and site safety.

Specialized technical injects examined dangerous goods response operations, infrastructure restoration efforts, and coordinated tasking through provincial emergency management channels. Overall, the exercise strengthened safety, readiness, and operational confidence across SDG Counties.

Recipients of the 2025-2026 E.A. Danby awards were honoured at the AMCTO Awards Gala Dinner that took place the evening of Tuesday, June 9, at Deerhurst Resort in Huntsville, ON.

Recipients will also be acknowledged in a special awards section in the Association's *Municipal Monitor* quarterly publication. Letters of congratulations are also sent by the Association to the recipients' council for formal recognition and acknowledgement within their respective municipalities.

Congratulations to all 2025-2026 E.A. Danby Award recipients!