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## STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN 2012

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*Draft v2*

### Executive Summary

A communications plan is an important part of CASA's daily operations. A living document, it frames our media activities, clarifies our priorities, and identifies resource requirements. It sets strategic directions for indicating what we communicate to whom, both inside and outside of CASA itself. It is driven by our vision, mission, values and beliefs. It is also a vehicle for delivery of strategic goals.

This strategic communications plan supports and contributes to CASA's business plan and strategic direction. It outlines strategic communications to CASA members, and through them, to their own stakeholders.

A key component of the 2012 strategic communications plan is the need for benchmarking of metrics. Without that base, measurements are subjective. The benchmarking survey was completed at the end of November, 2011 and information from it will be used to develop to accurately measure future progress in reaching identified goals.

This over-arching communications plan is supplemented by specific communications plans for each CASA project. Targeted outreach included in those plans meets direction provided at the Board's strategic planning workshop.

An annual tactical communications plan is also developed by the Communications Committee and the CASA Secretariat. It outlines detailed actions required to achieve the strategic communications goals, and identifies resources required to carry out this plan.

The Communications Committee determined key priorities based on the strategic planning now underway. Those priorities were validated by results of the benchmarking exercise.

### Guiding principles for communication

The CASA communications plan is guided by the following principles:

1. Our communication efforts will focus on stakeholders and initiatives.
2. We will encourage informed dialogue between stakeholders and invite feedback.
3. We acknowledge the diversity of opinions of our stakeholders.
4. We will use simple, easily understood language that promotes a common understanding of CASA, its goals and accomplishments.
5. We will support members in their role as communicators for CASA.
6. We will evaluate the effectiveness of our communications plans and ensure continuous improvement.
7. Communications related expenditures will be cost effective and focused on results.

## Communications goals

The overall communications goals of the 2012 strategic communications plan are:

1. Determine the level for Albertans' awareness of, understanding of, and support for CASA. (The term "Albertan" includes CASA stakeholders, their constituents, and the general public.)
2. Develop the tools necessary to enable CASA to deliver on its strategic goals.
3. Identify opportunities for improvement of internal communications within CASA.

## Communications Priorities for 2012

The Communications Advisor and Secretariat execute CASA's communications plan and the Board's Communications Committee oversees that implementation. Each year, the Board of Directors approves the strategic communications plan and receives a progress report. In addition, project teams approve a communications plan with key messages, measureable tactics and strategies specific to each project's charter.

Because the 2012 goals are sequential, each priority rests on the successful completion of the previous step.

Communications Goals	Priorities for 2012
Goal 1: Determine the level for Albertans' awareness of, understanding of, and support for CASA.	1) Contract a benchmarking survey against which future initiatives can be accurately measured  2) Develop an ongoing plan to ensure future metrics stay up to date
Goal 2: Develop the tools necessary to enable CASA to deliver on its strategic goals.	1) Develop a tactical communications plan based on the strategic goals and using knowledge gained from the benchmarking exercise.  2) Translate the target audience portion from communications plan into a comprehensive database populated by stakeholder input, and make it available to all stakeholders.
Goal 3: Identify opportunities for improvement of internal communications within CASA.	1) Consider synergies and existing links to maximize internal communications by <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Conducting a communications audit</li> <li>ii. Convening a Coordination Workshop</li> </ol>

## Overarching Key Messages

These key messages answer three key questions that CASA members and their stakeholders often ask. In totality, they describe what CASA is, how we work, and show our successes.

- 1) CASA is a dynamic multi-stakeholder partnership providing leadership and strategies to address air quality issues in Alberta.
- 2) At CASA, government, industry and non-government organizations use a collaborative consensus process to develop innovative solutions to complex air quality issues.
- 3) With over 15 years experience, CASA has a proven track record of achievements:
  - a) Our Flaring and Venting project won both an Emerald Award and a CCME Pollution Prevention Award
  - b) Another Emerald Award went to our Electricity project.
  - c) Our consensus process was awarded the Arthur Kroeger Award for Policy Leadership.

Messaging related to specific air quality issues will be developed by the appropriate CASA Project Team, consistent with CASA communications policy.

## Evaluation

CASA incorporates tracking and evaluation into its communications planning process, but without an accurate benchmark, that evaluation is often subjective and anecdotal. CASA's tactical communications plan (to be provided as information in March 2012) will specify measureable tactics and strategies to achieve the above strategic communications goals. Performance Measure 5 already specifies how to measure the degree of recognition of CASA. More information about that performance measure is available on the CASA website at <http://www.casahome.org/Projects/Currentboardcommittees/PerformanceMeasuresCommittee/PerformanceMeasuresIndicators.aspx>.