

SOUTHERN ALBERTA PIONEERS FOUNDATION



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Vol. 5 No. 2

[Foundation's Website](#)

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January 2026

President's Message

I am very honoured to serve as your President for the next year, and I look forward to continuing to work with the impressive group of volunteers that make up our Board and Executive, Committee Chairs and Members, and those who help keep the Memorial Building and the Foundation running smoothly.

The annual Christmas decorating of the Memorial Building took place on November 22 and, thanks to **Gabrielle** and a team of volunteers, the result was spectacular. I attended a private function at the building at the end of November and there were many, many compliments of the building and of the Christmas decorations (many had never been in the building before.) It was truly beautiful and made quite an impression. Thank you to Gabrielle for her leadership and work in dressing the building up for Christmas.

During 2025, we were aware of the need for a couple of technology upgrades. Because the old office computers could not support a required upgrade to Windows 11, John Hutchings and the Board made plans to replace them before the end of the year. Thanks to some crack Black Friday shopping by John, the computers were replaced under budget in November.

The other priority has been the acute need for an upgraded or new Foundation website that is better able to showcase the building and property and allow for more flexible administration. A well-designed website that displays current photographs and videos of the property and building will help to increase our building rentals. This project was started in 2025, and we are currently reviewing proposals from website developers.

Our long time City of Calgary Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinator (NPC), Sarah Papineau, left us in 2025 for a new job in the City's Parks Department and her replacement, Kevin Forbes, attended his first SAPF Board meeting last October. Sarah was an excellent NPC and Kevin appears to be filling her shoes very well. Our relationship with the City of Calgary is unique and Kevin will be doing a short orientation presentation at the January 20 SAPF Board meeting to help us all better understand our responsibilities as a community partner.

The 2025 to 2030 Business Plan (a City of Calgary requirement) was completed in November and will not need to be submitted again until 2030. A very big thank you to Brian Rogers, John Hutchings, and Sharon Hoiland for completing this task.



Nancy Thompson
President 2026

As well, at an early 2025 meeting with members of the City's finance team, Brian and I were able to clarify the nature of the Memorial Building Fund and, as a result, the financial risk rating for the SAPF was changed from "Elevated" to "Low." Not only is this a relief, but we feel it more accurately reflects our true financial risk. That said, however, our finances remain in need of work, and we will continue to focus on increasing our building rental revenue and donations to both the Memorial Building Fund and the Southern Alberta Pioneers Fund (with the Calgary Foundation.)

Best wishes to you all in 2026 and I hope to see many of you at the Spring Cleanup on April 25!

I'd like to close by expressing my thanks and appreciation to John Hutchings and the Building Committee for their continued hard work to keep the building running as smoothly as possible, which is often very challenging. Despite the furnace going out at the end of November 2025, these people (and Gabrielle) were able to keep the building warm (and usable) until the repairs could be completed. Thanks to many space heaters (and a testament to the insulating properties of log construction), no events had to be cancelled.

Memorial Building Committee Report

by John Hutchings, Building Committee Chair

Building Committee Members

John Hutchings (Chair)	403-613-9798	sap.office@pioneersalberta.org
Dan Shaw	403-861-3000	danshaw1959@gmail.com
Jeff Hill	403-225-2397	jeff.hill@shaw.ca
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Building Rentals

As of December 2025, we have 91 rental days in the books with another 5 months to go this fiscal year (June 2024 – May 2025). We had a very busy summer season with 40 rental days in June, July and August of 2025.

We have already booked 31 rental days for the 2026-27 fiscal year including 16 days in August of 2026.

Not only are rentals vital in keeping the building financially afloat, they also satisfy the lease requirement that states that our facility must be accessible to the public at least 50% of the time. We would like to have more rentals during our slower months in the winter, such as corporate conferences, retreats, etc.

If your company is looking for such a venue, the Memorial Building is an excellent and unique location. Members receive a 20% discount on the rental rate. Please call Gabrielle Leah at 403-807-0550 for any rental enquiries. Also, if you are going to visit the building other than on Historic Mondays, please contact Gabrielle to be sure that the building is not occupied with renters that day.

Building Condition Assessment (BCA)

Every five years, the City conducts an inspection on their community facilities including ours. The BCA is a base for us to prepare a "Life Cycle Report," which is a comprehensive list of items that indicate the years remaining when it needs to be replaced or refurbished along with an estimated cost. The report is useful in prioritizing building upgrades, and there is no cost to SAPF for this report.

The last BCA was completed on May 28 by a Stantec Consultant, and it was issued in October 2025. The Report listed the following as "Immediate Action Items".

- Unsealed penetration through a log wall was observed above the electrical panel in the main office and unsealed penetration was observed above the electrical panel B2A in the furnace room.
- One (1) extinguisher in the sprinkler room was set on the floor instead of wall-mounted. No extinguishers were seen in the mechanical room. The mounting of the sprinkler room fire extinguisher, and the installation of a fire extinguisher in the mechanical room, are recommended to occur immediately.

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- We noted that there are no yellow markings or paint on the natural gas lines in the mechanical room. Identification by markings or paint is a Natural Gas and Propane Installation Code requirement.
- The pole and lamp at the garbage enclosure are aged and damaged and the light reportedly does not operate. The area is poorly illuminated and may be considered unsafe at night.
- No dedicated carbon monoxide (CO) detectors were observed in the building. It was not confirmed if the smoke detectors were combination units. Recommendation to confirm if current smoke detectors include CO detection.
- The annual inspection conducted on June 6, 2025, indicated that the alarm panel battery had failed due to age. **(This battery was replaced in July 2025)**

Next steps are to analyze the major work that is recommended for the next two years, establish a scope of work, and then apply for a City of Calgary Community Conservation Grant (CCG) and Community Facility Enhancement Program (CFEP) grant to fund the work. Much like we did as noted in the 2024 Life Cycle Project.

Johnson Controls

All the mandatory annual inspections have been completed by Johnson Controls. These inspections include:

- Backflow Valves
- Fire Extinguishers
- Fire Alarm System
- Backup power battery deficiency in the fire panel. It was replaced on July 10. These batteries must be replaced a minimum of every four years
- Wet Sprinkler and Antifreeze System
- On July 15, 2025, mandatory five-year inspections and pressure tests were done on the Fire Department connection piping and the antifreeze and backflow preventer.

We have signed a new three-year contract with Johnson Controls for the inspections commencing March 1, 2026.

Front Doors

The front doors were refinished once more in Sept. 2025 due to exposure to the sun and weather. The doors were installed in 2014 and were first refinished in 2021 by Chalmers Heritage Restoration (CHC). We really need to have this area covered to provide shelter from the elements; this would be a major project.



Furnaces

As you might recall, SAPD had new furnaces and air conditioning units installed during the 2019/2020 Building Upgrade Project. There are two furnaces, a large one for upstairs and a smaller one for downstairs; both are in the downstairs furnace room. These are commercial grade Engineered Air furnaces designed for buildings, so they are larger and more complicated than a traditional house furnace.

The upstairs furnace broke down on November 25; our serviceman has been trying to solve the problem ever since. The initial analysis was faulty ignitors.

Unfortunately, they were a long delivery item and, when they were finally installed on January 7, it did not rectify the problem.



Andrew from Official Plumbing and Heating

We are continuing to try to figure this out and have been in contact with subject matter experts, so hopefully it will be fixed soon. In the meantime, we have been using space heaters and the downstairs furnace to keep the building warm. There have been no issues with freezing pipes.

Little Free Library

A reminder that we would love to have you donate to our little library any extra books about Southern Alberta that you may have. While you are at the building, you might find some real treasures in the library.

Thanks to an Invaluable Team

I would like to thank Gabrielle Priel and her son Jordon for all the work they do in and around the building. They are keeping it in pristine shape.



Doors before and after being refinished

Memorial Building Annual Christmas Decorating

by John Hutchings

The Annual Memorial Building Christmas decorating was held on Saturday, November 22 at 10:00 am. Ten volunteers came out and, under the watchful eye of Gabrielle Priel, the building was transformed into a winter wonderland in only a matter of a few hours.



Can you spot Colin Wake and Carla Begalke decorating the big tree on the left side of the photo? In the meantime, Alan Lynas and Dan Shaw do their part by carefully planning the next steps



Steph West takes care to make the mini tree look merry and joyful



Nancy Thompson and Lana Jones sort through SAPD's mostly red eye-catching decorations



Carla Begalke and Dan Shaw pose in front of the elegantly decorated tree



Gabrielle and Marcel add a touch of festive cheer to the mantelpiece