

Vegreville CA Curtis Palichuk named as co-Chair of new provincial accounting body

A prominent Vegreville Chartered Accountant is now at the centre of the movement to unify the accounting profession in Alberta and across Canada – a move that will have an impact locally and across the country.

Curtis Palichuk CA, a partner at the Vegreville firm of Wilde and Company, was recently appointed as a co-chair of the Alberta Accountants Unification Agency, the transitional body formed to lead the unification of Alberta's Chartered Accountants (CAs), Certified Management Accountants (CMAs) and Certified General Accountants (CGAs). Curtis also serves in the volunteer role of Secretary-Treasurer of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Alberta, the regulatory body charged with the governance of the CA profession in the province.

As co-chair of the unification agency, Curtis will help lead the three accounting designations to a new, unified designation, the Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA). It's a job that Curtis relishes, knowing that the decisions he and his colleagues make in the next several months will have an impact on Alberta for decades to come.

"Having the three designations come together now makes a lot of sense," says Curtis. "Over the last 10 years or so, the skills and training for all three existing designations have become very comparable to each other. We strongly believe that moving to a single, high standard under the CPA banner will serve communities well, and eliminate the confusion about the differences between the old designations."

Curtis notes that his leadership role on the transition team will ensure that the business needs of smaller communities are a high

priority as unification proceeds. "Ensuring that Albertans outside of our big centres have access to a full range of accounting services, provided by designated professionals who have demonstrated the highest levels of training and competency, will be first and foremost for me as we move toward the CPA designation in Alberta," he says. "It is vital that Albertans have full confidence in the new accounting designation that they will start seeing, and my colleagues and I who are shaping this new designation in Alberta will do all we can to build that confidence."

A feature of the CPA designation will be the new on-ramps into the profession for Albertans. For example, a new program is being established this year for Albertans who want to earn a nationally-recognized accounting certificate but choose not to pursue the full CPA designation. This certification will be of particular interest to those who hold accounting diplomas rather than bachelor degrees. "Whether you're an accounting graduate from Portage College, Lakeland College or the University of Alberta, there will be a spot for you within the unified profession," Curtis notes. "While a bachelor's degree will be required to earn the CPA designation, the other options available for diploma grads, or those who bring real-life accounting experience to the table, are options that offer rewarding careers for those who choose them. I think that will be of real benefit to Albertans in all corners of the province."

The first item on Curtis's task list in 2014 is to help lead the unification agency's collaborative work with the Government of Alberta to obtain passage of legislation to formalize the establishment of the CPA designation in Alberta. "Our profession

is provincially regulated, and we are focused right now on working with the government to obtain legislation that demonstrates the high standards of the new designation and helps us build the trust of Albertans in it," he says. Curtis and his colleagues at the unification agency expect legislation to be introduced in the Alberta Legislature in the fall of this year.

Overall, 2014 is going to be an exciting and even historic year for the designated accounting profession in Alberta, and, through the leadership contributions of a Vegreville CA, east-central Alberta will be the source of many of the unification decisions that get made over the next several months. "I really want to hear from people in Vegreville and surrounding communities about what they think about this project," Curtis notes. "I know that for most people, what happens in the accounting profession is not top-of-mind. But it is still vital that our profession hear from Albertans, and that we make sure their needs and priorities are addressed. That will be my focus in the coming months as I work with my colleagues to create this new designation in Alberta."



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