

Operations Report to the Board

June 19, 2025

Introduction

This report provides the Alberta Equestrian Federation (AEF) Board of Directors with a detailed and strategically aligned summary of operational activities and progress from the first half of 2025. Each section demonstrates how AEF continues to deliver on its five-year Strategic Plan (2023–2028), with a focus on enhancing member experience, ensuring financial and operational sustainability, supporting grassroots and sport development, and modernizing internal systems for long-term impact.

AEF has made significant strides this reporting period in the areas of technology modernization, policy development, coach education, membership services, communications, and competition programming. Highlights include the successful launch of the HorseReg membership platform, substantial targeted donations toward athlete, coach and leadership development, strong uptake in grassroots programs, expanded public outreach through Horse Expo and other provincial events, and progress toward a modernized Safe Sport framework in alignment with new provincial expectations.

The updates outlined in this report reflect the strength of cross-team collaboration, the responsiveness of our staff to sector changes, and our commitment to delivering high-quality programs and services that reflect the evolving needs of Alberta's equestrian community.

Grant Overview and Revenue Development

Association Development Program Grant

Updates to the ADP Program for 2025 - The Government introduced changes to the Association Development Program (ADP) funding process this year, streamlining the application and accountability requirements into one combined process through the online portal. In previous years, these were submitted separately at different times, which made the process more complex and time consuming. Now, budgets, business plans and strategic plans are due 30 days before our fiscal year-end, with all other accountability documents submitted within 180 days after year-end, directly through the portal. This improved process reduces the stress of workload and allows for earlier processing of funds; we received the first installment of our ADP funding in May.

- **Type/Project:** Core Government of Alberta (GOA) funding
- **Amount:** \$81,700
- **Payment Schedule:** Two payments of \$40,850 each in May/June and potentially by July.
- **Current Status:** \$40,850

Donations

In alignment with our strategic priority to ensure organizational stability through sustainable sources of revenue, we are pleased to report the receipt of two significant donations totaling

\$562,000 through the Donation Fund Program. These generous contributions were received in February and May from the Raymond James Canada Foundation and the Calgary Foundation, respectively. In accordance with donor and grant restrictions, these funds are designated specifically for Athlete Development, Coach Development, Officials Development, Leadership Development, Event Support, or Equine Livestock Support, and must remain separate from general revenue.

The Executive Director will oversee the appropriate application of these restricted funds, ensuring alignment with eligible program areas, while the Finance Team will provide transparent reporting on their allocation within the financial forecast submitted to the Finance Committee.

General donations remain modest, with \$333 received to date in unrestricted donations. Additionally, \$1,360 has been raised through scholarship donations and pin sales, and \$2,945 through the Trail Supporter Fund. As we move forward, and once our website functionality is restored, AEF will need to consider targeted fundraising strategies to enhance support for Rider and Educational Scholarships and the Trail Supporter Program.

Casino Fundraising Event – Strategic Importance and Board Participation Request

As part of AEF’s ongoing commitment to organizational stability through sustainable revenue, our upcoming casino fundraising event, scheduled for **December 3 and 4, 2025** at the **Deerfoot Inn & Casino in Calgary**, is a pivotal opportunity to generate essential funding that directly supports the delivery of our member programs. These funds are vital to advancing multiple pillars of our 2023–2028 Strategic Plan, including enhancing the member experience, ensuring strong team performance, and expanding leadership in social responsibility.

We extend our sincere thanks to **Jason, Sandy, Ally, Kate, and Jennifer**, who have already stepped up as **Key Volunteers** and we have now completed the casino license application. With this foundational step now complete, we urgently need the **rest of the Board** to lead by example and commit to volunteering.

Casino fundraising is not just a financial exercise; it is an act of **governance leadership**. As Directors of the AEF, your participation in this event is a **direct reflection of our shared responsibility to steward the organization’s financial health** and fulfill our strategic commitments. AEF requires a minimum of 25 volunteers to run this casino successfully, and your involvement is critical to meeting that goal.

We ask all Board members to submit a completed volunteer application **no later than July 31, 2025**. You are also encouraged to invite trusted friends and family; volunteers do not need to be AEF members. All roles are well-supported, require no prior experience, and offer free meals, hotel accommodation (for those traveling over 100 km), and a fun, social environment.

Your leadership in this event directly enables AEF to continue delivering quality programming, expanding access, and remaining a strong, trusted voice for Alberta’s equine community. We urge every Board member to step forward, **this is one of the most tangible and impactful ways you can fulfill your governance role in support of our mission.**

Active Living Program Updates

AEF's Active Living programs continue to promote physical activity, equine connection, and healthy lifestyles among members of all ages, supporting our strategic priority to enhance the member experience through meaningful engagement.

Ride & Drive Program

The Ride & Drive program remains a popular initiative that encourages members to log time spent riding or driving their horses, reinforcing consistent participation and equine connection.

- 2025 Participants Registered: 178
- Members actively earn rewards as they reach key hour milestones, celebrating their dedication to staying active with their horses.

Live Outside the Box (LOTB)

The LOTB program targets youth aged 7 to 15 and fosters holistic well-being through a fun, goal-oriented approach to physical activity.

- 2025 participants signed up: 155
- Youth are encouraged to track horse time, general physical activity, and healthy eating habits, creating positive lifestyle habits at an early age.

These programs not only support individual wellness but also contribute to building a more connected, active equestrian community in Alberta.

Membership Overview and System Modernization

As of June 2025, AEF's active membership stands at 9,862, representing a slight decline from the same time last year. While adult memberships remain relatively stable, we have observed a modest decrease in youth memberships, which we will continue to monitor. Business and club memberships have held steady, maintaining levels consistent with previous years. However, Jump Alberta and AEVA memberships have seen a slight decline, signaling an opportunity for further outreach and engagement with these affiliated groups.

Membership Database Modernization: HorseReg Transition

In alignment with AEF's strategic objective to strengthen internal systems and enhance the member experience, we are pleased to report on the successful implementation of HorseReg by Interpodia, which is now fully replacing the previous MyMembers platform.

This modern, integrated system significantly improves reliability, usability, and operational efficiency. All core functions have been transitioned, with final data migration for business and club memberships expected by July 1, 2025. Early feedback from staff and members has been overwhelmingly positive, with users noting the platform's ease of use, responsiveness, and intuitive interface.

Key benefits of the HorseReg transition include:

- Reduction in manual administrative tasks
- Enhanced member self-service and access
- Greater scalability to support future membership growth
- Improved data accuracy, reporting, and automation

Business & Club Memberships: Integration Update

Currently, business and club memberships are being processed through WIX as an interim measure. Work is actively underway to migrate these memberships into the new HorseReg platform, which will allow for:

- Unified membership management under a single system
- Streamlined application, renewal, and verification processes
- Improved administrative efficiency for both staff and members
- Enhanced digital tools for clubs and businesses, including real-time status tracking and support

By consolidating all membership types within HorseReg, AEF is taking a major step toward modernized, member-centric service delivery that will support long-term growth and stronger community engagement.

Communications and Engagement

Website Management

In alignment with AEF's commitment to enhancing member experience and strengthening our digital infrastructure, we initiated a full website redevelopment process this spring. The previous website was taken offline at the end of March and temporarily replaced while we undertook a competitive RFP process, resulting in the selection of Twirling Umbrellas as our web development contractor. After completing the discovery, design mock-up, and prototype phases, we are now in active development. The new site, built in WordPress, is expected to launch in the first half of July. It will offer significantly improved accessibility, intuitive navigation, a built in board portal, a streamlined layout, and give AEF full control over content management and analytics, critical for future engagement and reporting.

Google Analytics

From March to May 2025, our Google Business Profile saw 1,412 interactions, a 21% increase from the same period last year, and 1,110 clicks to our website, even with limited content availability. While overall profile views held steady, the volume of searches showing our profile rose nearly 50%, reflecting growing online interest. Top search queries remained consistent with organizational branding, though some external election-related confusion was noted.

The website update led to a temporary two-month suspension of E-News. However, regular communications resumed with an update in late May (40% open rate, 5% click-through) regarding the transition from MyMembers to HorseReg. A June 6 edition followed (30% open rate, 2% click-through), and regular publication will continue.

Alberta Bits

Alberta Bits is back on track, with the Summer 2025 edition in print. This issue features timely and practical content on emergency and disaster preparedness, including a compelling feature on last year's Jasper wildfire evacuation. Of note, only around 230 members have opted to pay for Alberta Bits, indicating limited uptake of the printed version. Following the conclusion of our current two-year publishing contract, we will revisit whether to continue producing print editions or explore fully digital alternatives. This review will be guided by member preferences, cost-effectiveness, and communication impact.

Social Media

On social media, we saw excellent engagement across platforms. Facebook posts between March and May reached 39.5K users, with notable spikes from event-related content such as Horse Expo. Instagram performance grew significantly, with 54K total views (up 132%) and a reach of 17K (up 366%), with similarly strong engagement during Horse Expo activities.

To support brand consistency, a supplemental social media strategy was developed to ensure alignment in tone, voice, and visuals across all posts, enabling more staff to confidently contribute to content creation.

Equine Emergency Disaster Fund

Finally, the Equine Emergency Disaster Fund has been formalized with a project plan and application process. Applications will open June 15 and close September 30, with two assessment rounds scheduled in July and October. While the process ensures due diligence, it retains flexibility to adapt to unique emergency circumstances.

Competitions, Athlete Development and Events

Wild Rose and Sanctioned Competition Program

In alignment with our strategic goal to enhance the member experience and provide accessible, educational competition opportunities, AEF continues to administer grassroots competitions under the Wild Rose framework. Wild Rose competitions are designed to prioritize safety, equine welfare, and inclusivity, while also serving as a gateway to more advanced competition levels. These events are guided by the Wild Rose Rulebook and supported by AEF-certified officials.

The 2025 season has introduced **two significant developments**:

- The addition of dressage to the Wild Rose Provincial Circuit, allowing participants to accumulate points and qualify for end-of-season awards.
- A new partnership agreement with Working Equitation Canada (WECan), permitting competitions to sanction as Wild Rose Working Equitation Schooling Shows. These events use WECan's rules and officials and offer creditable officiating activity for licensed WECan officials.

As of June 3, 2025, current competition participation includes:

Competition Level	2024	2025 (YTD)
Wild Rose Competition Sanctioning (All Disciplines)	30	2
Wild Rose Schooling Shows (HJ, Dressage)	16	25
Wild Rose Provincial Circuit (HJ, Dressage*)	27	19
EC Bronze Sanctioned	14	11
EC Silver Sanctioned	2	1

AEF also continues to oversee Bronze and Silver competitions sanctioned by Equestrian Canada.

Competition Program Enhancements

Informed by feedback from competitors, organizers, and officials, AEF made several structural updates to the Wild Rose program in 2024 and early 2025 to reduce barriers to entry, broaden access, and support safe, inclusive, and value-driven sport experiences. Notable changes include:

- Expanding sanctioning to more disciplines at the schooling level
- Streamlining application and registration processes
- Adding discipline-specific recognition through year-end awards

These enhancements are already showing results, schooling show participation has risen significantly, and the Wild Rose Provincial Circuit has gained credibility, especially with the successful presentation of hunter/jumper awards at the 2025 Jump Alberta Gala.

Equine Medication Control

To uphold horse welfare standards, AEF continues its Equine Medication Control Program. One Wild Rose Provincial Circuit event has undergone sample collection in 2025, with results all coming back negative. What is the third strategic priority listed in the AEF 2023–2028 Strategic Plan? The first two board members to send in the correct answer will win a prize. Don't guess, check the plan! Three additional events will also include on-site testing by a Wild Rose Drug Test Technician later this season.

Officials Development Program

As part of our strategic commitment to ensuring strong team performance (internal and external), AEF is developing a new Provincial Officials Curriculum in 2025. This formalized framework will guide certification and continuing education for officials across disciplines.

Planned initiatives include:

- Discipline-specific training clinics

- Structured mentorship models
- Roundtable consultations with certified officials to inform curriculum content

Current AEF Carded Officials (as of June 3, 2025):

Role	Total
General Performance	21
Hunter/Jumper	24
Dressage	13
Driving	3
Stewards	8
Total	60

Event Participation and Public Outreach

AEF’s presence at industry events continues to support strategic goals around leadership, member engagement, and social license. Staff, and a couple AEF volunteers represented AEF at multiple events between January and June 2025, with key highlights below:

Event Engagement Highlights

- **Jump Alberta Year End Awards Gala (Jan. 4, Calgary):**
AEF presented 58 Wild Rose Provincial Circuit awards, reinforcing the value of grassroots competition and recognizing outstanding achievement in Hunter/Jumper sport.
- **Alberta Outfitters Association AGM (March 8, Olds):**
AEF delivered a formal presentation on equestrian recreation and trail resources, beginning important conversations on partnership and responsible land use with Alberta’s outfitting community.
- **Crowsnest Public Land Recreation Symposium (March 13, Blairmore):**
AEF participated in cross-sector discussions on stewardship, trail infrastructure, and land access. This event allowed AEF to build regional alliances and promote shared trail ethics.
- **Alberta Dressage Association AGM (April 12, Red Deer):**
Provided a platform to announce the new Wild Rose Dressage Provincial Circuit. Engagement with this community opened doors for future collaboration on officials development and education.
- **Horse Expo 2025 (April 25–28, Red Deer):**
AEF included an interactive station at our booth featuring Rookie Riders demos, a “Coaching Station,” branded merchandise, a digital photo booth, and more. We also managed the Presentation Lounge, which featured expert talks on horsemanship,

coaching, and equine health. The AEF Provincial Awards were also presented to the eight recipients during this event, resulting in cost savings over a stand-alone event, and increased awareness of the awards program. Attendance at Horse Expo remains one of AEF’s most effective public outreach opportunities.

- **Share the Trails – Canmore (May 31, Canmore):**
As part of a multi-user trail safety day, AEF educated hikers, cyclists, and land managers on equestrian trail etiquette and environmental stewardship, reinforcing our role in shared-use recreation.

Upcoming and Pending Events (2025)

Event	Date	Location	Status
The Xibition Inc. Reining Show	August 2–9	Calgary	Pending
Spruce Meadows Masters (<i>50th Anniversary</i>)	September 3–7	Calgary	Planning
National Coaching Symposium & Leadership Mtgs	September 8–12	Calgary	Hosting
Royal West	October 16–25	Calgary	Pending

These events support outreach to underserved competition groups, high-performance stakeholders, and sport leaders across the nation. AEF will continue to ensure visibility, build partnerships, and promote member offerings at each venue.

Coach Development and National Leadership Initiatives

2025 National Coaching Symposium & Leadership Meetings

In alignment with AEF’s strategic goals to expand learning opportunities and national leadership, we are proud to host the 2025 National Coaching Symposium & Leadership Meetings in Calgary from Sept. 8 to 12, 2025, at the Courtyard by Marriott Calgary South and EPIC Stables.

This national event will bring together coaching administrators, certified coaches, and sport leaders from across Canada to shape the future of equestrian coaching and sport governance. The program includes expert-led workshops, interactive panel discussions, and leadership meetings aimed at strengthening both the coaching system and the organizational capacity of equestrian sport.

- Registration is open: June 6 to Aug. 1, 2025
- Program focus: Coaching system advancement, Safe Sport, leadership development, and knowledge exchange

This initiative reflects a collaborative, all-staff effort:

- The Executive Director is leading the national leadership meetings component.
- The Sport and Recreation Manager is overseeing coaching program design and speaker coordination.

- The Project & Event Coordinator is managing venue logistics, sponsorships, registrations and participant experience.
- All staff are contributing to event delivery and guest support.

Keynote Speakers and Contributors

The event will feature top leaders in sport and equestrian development, including:

- Allison Forsyth – Safe Sport advocate and Olympian
- Ruth Allum – NCCP Master Coach Developer and high-performance coach
- Tara Lambie – Alberta’s NCCP Master Coach Developer, leading EC coaching tool redevelopment
- Sandra Sokoloski – Rider movement and physiotherapy specialist
- Danielle Yaghdjian – Rookie Riders and foundational coach development expert

National and Provincial Partnerships

This event is supported by a strong network of national and provincial partners, including: *Equestrian Canada, EPIC Stables, Alberta Equestrian Federation, Acera Insurance, NCCP, Momentum IT Group, Ontario Equestrian, Horse Council BC, and Cheval Québec.*

These partnerships reflect a united effort to advance coaching standards, strengthen sport safety, and support grassroots to high-performance development.

Learn to Ride/Drive (LTRD) Program Participation

Participation in AEF’s Learn to Ride program remains strong and consistent, reaffirming our commitment to accessible, foundational equestrian education:

Year Assessments

2018	96
2019	106
2020	81
2021	77
2022	169
2023	203
2024	206
2025*	75 (YTD)

Growth and Strengthening of the Coaching Program

AEF continues to lead the delivery of Equestrian Canada NCCP coaching programs across English and Western disciplines.

Winter 2025 Cohort

- 21 candidates enrolled (19 English, 2 Western)
- Final evaluations concluding by June 2025

Fall 2025 Cohort (Scheduled Timeline)

- Registration: June 23 to Aug. 3
- Candidate review and acceptance: Aug. 4 to 8
- Payment deadline: Aug. 15
- Google Classroom Access: Aug. 20
- Delivery period: Sept. 15 to Dec. 15
(Sessions: Mondays at 7PM with select Wednesdays for NCCP modules)

Recent In-Person Evaluations

- May 10, 2025 – Ponoka (Extreme Stables):
 - 2 candidates certified as English Competition Coach
 - 2 additional candidates scheduled for re-evaluation

Operational Improvements

- Implemented new Facility Guide to standardize site setup and improve delivery
- Launched Facility Survey to support continuous improvement and engagement
- Positive feedback received from candidates and evaluators

Financial Sustainability of Coaching Program

To ensure the ongoing viability and competitiveness of our coaching development offerings, evaluation fees were adjusted in 2025 for the first time since 2018. These updates reflect current industry standards and support AEF's strategic focus on financial sustainability.

Context	2018–2024 Fee	2025 Fee
Instructor Evaluation	\$500 + GST	\$1,000 + GST
Competition Coach	\$600 + GST	\$1,200 + GST

These adjustments will ensure that the program continues to offer high-quality, nationally recognized training and certification experiences while covering associated delivery costs.

Policies and Safe Sport

Alberta Sport Leadership Association and PSO Engagement Session – Safe Sport Strategy Update

We attended the ASLA/PSO Engagement Session on May 20 to 21, 2025, which was an excellent and highly informative event focused on advancing Alberta's sport sector through the implementation of a comprehensive Safe Sport Strategy. The session highlighted the Government of Alberta's requirement for all PSOs to adopt an Independent Third-Party Mechanism (ITPM) to address maltreatment in sport. ASLA has secured funding from the province (\$3M) and selected ALIAS-Solutions as the ITPM provider, with Blue Rock Law supporting policy development and alignment.

This was a fantastic opportunity to hear from sector experts and gain clarity on the tools, policies, and procedures needed for effective complaint management. We will have some work ahead to update our own Safe Sport Policy Suite to align with the standardized provincial framework. It is reassuring that the Government of Alberta is supporting the third-party mechanism for handling complaints, and we are looking forward to the upcoming pilot launch of the new online complaint process in the fall.

Organizational Policy Alignment and Development Update

In alignment with our strategic priority to ensure strong internal governance and operational consistency, AEF continues to advance a major initiative to consolidate and modernize our organizational policies into a comprehensive, accessible, and unified policy suite.

This work includes not only updating existing documents but also identifying and developing critical policies that are currently missing or outdated. Supporting documents, such as procedures and guidelines, are also being reviewed and integrated to ensure alignment and clarity across departments and functions.

As many of our current documents exist as separate, stand-alone items, this is a significant and detailed project requiring thorough review and restructuring. A full Table of Contents (TOC) has been established to guide the framework, and I'm pleased to report that over half of the policies are now incorporated into the new structure. Additional content from the Safe Sport policy manual is also being integrated to promote alignment with provincial and national standards.

While this work is ongoing, it remains a high-priority initiative, receiving dedicated attention and focus. The end result will be a cohesive, well-organized policy suite that strengthens operational integrity, supports compliance, and enhances staff orientation and accountability.

Conclusion

The AEF continues to build momentum in delivering on its strategic objectives, with clear progress in operational modernization, member engagement, education, and sport development. Through improved systems, targeted financial stewardship, inclusive programs, and strategic partnerships, we are positioning the organization to meet the present with agility and prepare for the future with confidence.

This reporting period marks a transition from infrastructure and system-building to expanded delivery and impact. The groundwork laid in areas such as membership modernization, policy alignment, and Safe Sport implementation will provide a solid foundation for growth and accountability.

We are grateful to the Board of Directors for their continued leadership and guidance. The collective efforts of our staff, volunteers, and partners are making a tangible difference in how equestrian sport and recreation are experienced across Alberta. We look forward to the next phase of implementation and to continuing to serve as a trusted and forward-thinking leader in Alberta's equine community.

Respectfully submitted

Sonia Dantu