

Operations Report to the Board

November 6, 2025

Introduction

This report provides the Alberta Equestrian Federation (AEF) Board of Directors with a comprehensive and strategically aligned summary of activities and outcomes from July through October 2025. It reflects AEF's continued progress under the 2023–2028 Strategic Plan, focusing on:

- Enhancing the member experience
- Ensuring financial and operational sustainability
- Supporting grassroots and sport development
- Modernizing internal systems for long-term impact

Since the June 2025 meeting, AEF has achieved several major milestones, including the launch of the new website, delivery of the 2025 National Coaching Symposium & Leadership Meetings, continued modernization of membership systems, expansion of grassroots programs, and sustained growth in communications and engagement. Collectively, these achievements underscore the organization's strong operational foundation and leadership in Alberta's equestrian sector.

As of October 15, 2025, AEF membership stands at approximately 12,220 members, representing about **95% of planned membership revenue** for the year.

Grant and Revenue Development

Association Development Program (ADP) Grant

The AEF received the final installment of \$40,850 from the Government of Alberta's Association Development Program in October. The new, streamlined submission process continues to support timely reporting and improved efficiency.

Donations and Fundraising

Donations remain modest, totaling \$333 in general contributions, \$1,360 through scholarships and pin sales, and \$2,945 through the Trail Supporter Fund. Fundraising strategy development remains a focus area for 2026, particularly to strengthen Rider and Educational Scholarships and Trail Support programs.

Financial Outlook

Following adjustments as directed by the Board, AEF is projecting a 2025 year-end surplus of approximately \$127,240. This strong fiscal outcome reflects careful financial management, improved event delivery, and increased operational efficiencies.

Member Funding, Bursaries, and Scholarships

AEF continues to support members and clubs through targeted funding, ensuring equitable access to development opportunities across Alberta.

During this reporting period:

- 3 clubs and 11 individual members received funding, totaling \$3,996.

- Three Trail Support grants were approved (\$4,500 total), pending final project completion.
- One scholarship recipient received \$1,500, and five Marlene Waldner Youth Bursaries were awarded (\$2,090 total).

These programs strengthen participation, leadership, and recognition within Alberta's equestrian community.

Membership Overview and System Modernization

AEF membership continues to grow, demonstrating healthy engagement and retention across all categories.

- As of October 2025, AEF has nearly 12,000 active members, an increase of more than 2,000 since June.
- 2026 memberships will open November 14 through HorseReg, with auto-renewals processed shortly thereafter. A strategic goal for 2026 is to expand auto-renewal participation, improving efficiency and retention.

System Modernization

The transition to a unified HorseReg database is nearing completion, integrating individual, club, and business memberships under one system. This modernization reduces manual administration, improves data accuracy, and enhances reporting.

Third-Party Partnerships

AEF continues to provide system support for Jump Alberta and the Alberta Equestrian Vaulting Association (AEVA) and is exploring expanded partnerships to increase sector collaboration and generate new revenue opportunities.

Active Living and Participation Programs

Ride & Drive and Live Outside the Box (LOTB) continue to promote physical activity and connection between members and their horses.

- Ride & Drive: 186 participants logged activity hours, with two members reaching the 2,000-hour milestone.
- LOTB: 155 youth participants engaged in tracking fitness and wellness activities, with prizes awarded and featured in E-News and Alberta Bits.

These programs remain vital in advancing AEF's commitment to active living and community engagement.

Communications and Member Engagement

Website Redevelopment

AEF's new website launched in late July, marking a major modernization milestone. The new site improves accessibility, navigation, and analytics capabilities.

- From July to September, the site generated over 4,400 Google search clicks and 41,900 impressions.
- Peak engagement occurred during the National Coaching Symposium, with nearly 2,000 views in one week.
- A new Board Portal provides improved governance access and information sharing.

E-News and Publications

Between July and September, 87,500 newsletters were delivered, achieving a strong open rate (over 50%) and consistent engagement.

Both the Summer and Fall editions of *Alberta Bits* introduced a redesigned format focused on storytelling and member experiences. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with additional copies requested by clubs. The Winter edition will be released in late November.

Social Media

From July to September, Facebook achieved a reach of 88,000 and over 280,000 post views, while Instagram engagement grew steadily. Content tied to events such as the Symposium, Trail Safety, and Youth Bursary announcements drove strong member interaction and brand visibility.

AEF also earned Meta's *Rising Creator* badge twice during this period—recognition for consistently producing original, high-quality content that engages audiences. This distinction increases our visibility by recommending AEF's page to new potential followers.

Competitions, Athlete Development, and Events

Wild Rose and Sanctioned Competitions

AEF continues to advance the Wild Rose Competition Program, promoting safe, educational, and inclusive sport participation.

- 2025 season includes 11 Wild Rose sanctioned events, 32 schooling shows, and 30 Provincial Circuit competitions.
- The addition of Dressage to the Provincial Circuit and a partnership with Working Equitation Canada (WECan) mark major program expansions.

The season concluded with the Alberta Dressage Association x AEF Awards Gala in October — a successful celebration of community and collaboration.

Officials Development

AEF is developing a Provincial Officials Curriculum to formalize training and certification pathways across disciplines.

As of October 2025, 58 carded officials are active province-wide, supporting consistent, professional event standards.

Event Participation and Public Outreach

AEF staff and volunteers represented the organization at numerous events, including:

- Spruce Meadows Masters (50th Anniversary)

- Horse Expo 2025
- National Coaching Symposium & Leadership Meetings
- Royal West
- Share the Trails: Canmore, West Bragg Creek, and Sandy McNabb
- Stride With Us and multiple AGMs

Each event reinforced AEF's visibility, partnerships, and leadership within the equestrian and recreation communities.

National Leadership, Coaching, and Athlete Development

AEF successfully hosted the 2025 National Coaching Symposium & Leadership Meetings (September 8–12, Calgary) in partnership with Equestrian Canada, bringing together more than 150 participants including PTSO representatives, certified coaches, and sport leaders from across Canada.

Held over five days, the event provided a valuable forum for collaboration, professional development, and open dialogue on advancing coaching education. It successfully strengthened inter-provincial collaboration and deepened connections within Alberta's coaching community, fostering a strong sense of unity and shared purpose among attendees.

This event further solidified AEF's national leadership role in coaching and sport development and showcased Alberta as a hub for innovation and professional learning within the equestrian sector.

Coaching Overview

- 575 certified coaches are currently active in Alberta.
 - 300 hold active NCCP certification.
 - 191 maintain Equestrian Canada Licensed Coach status.
- 12 AEF members are currently participating in the Fall Online Cohort, working toward achieving NCCP certification.

These numbers represent strong provincial participation and ongoing growth in formal coaching education and licensing across disciplines.

Coaching Program – Forward Plan Summary

AEF is advancing a renewed Coaching Program designed around accessibility, engagement, and community connection.

Building on lessons learned from previous delivery models, the program will adopt a more flexible approach that separates training and evaluation, allowing coaches to complete certification at their own pace through in-person or video evaluations.

Priorities moving forward include:

- Expanding access to NCCP certification and continuous professional development.
- Introducing mentorship and recognition initiatives to support coaches at all stages of their journey.
- Enhancing communication and transparency with Alberta's coaching community.

Equally important, AEF is committed to fostering a culture where coaches feel valued, supported, and respected in their career choices. Many coaches are small business owners whose livelihoods depend on their profession, and AEF aims to ensure they feel empowered as professionals contributing to Alberta's equestrian landscape.

Through these efforts, AEF continues to strengthen relationships, rebuild trust, and create a thriving coaching community grounded in collaboration, accountability, and mutual respect.

Athlete Development

The Learn to Ride (LTR) program continues to demonstrate steady participation and high engagement, with 92 assessments completed and 80 more in progress as of October 2025. This ongoing interest reinforces the program's value as an accessible entry point to safe, structured equestrian education and aligns with AEF's strategic objective of supporting skill development and lifelong participation.

Safe Sport and Policy Modernization

AEF continues to advance its Safe Sport framework and policy modernization project. Work remains focused on consolidating existing policies, aligning with the Government of Alberta's Independent Third-Party Mechanism, and strengthening internal compliance and accountability. Which part of a horse's leg is equivalent to a human's wrist? The first two Directors to email the correct answer to me will receive a prize.

This work ensures AEF remains proactive in maintaining safe, respectful, and transparent governance practices across all operations.

Financial and Organizational Sustainability

Planning for the December 3 – 4 Casino Fundraiser is well underway. This event is an important pillar of AEF's long-term sustainability and provides members and Directors with a meaningful way to contribute to organizational stability and growth.

Volunteer recruitment, licensing, and logistics have been successfully completed, positioning AEF for a smooth and successful delivery of this high-impact event.

Operational Planning and Staffing Structure

Following the Board's Strategic Planning Session in September, AEF staff completed the operational planning with Red Thread Connections to align internal priorities with the new strategic direction. As part of this work, the organization has initiated staff restructuring designed to strengthen collaboration and optimize resources.

The restructuring focuses on cross-collaboration and shared responsibility among team members, supporting greater operational flexibility, knowledge transfer, and resilience. The transition, reducing staff from seven to six while introducing part-time or contract roles for specialized support, will begin implementation in early 2026. This model aligns with the approved 2026 budget and enhances AEF's ability to deliver on its mission through teamwork, adaptability, and shared accountability.

Conclusion

Since June 2025, the AEF has continued to build on its strong foundation, achieving meaningful progress across strategic priorities, from digital modernization and program growth to national leadership and governance renewal.

Our progress reflects a dedicated team, effective collaboration, and the continued trust and leadership of our Board. As AEF moves into 2026, we are positioned for stability, growth, and continued excellence in serving Alberta's equestrian community.

Respectfully submitted,
Sonia Dantu
Executive Director