

Municipalities

Information and Ideas for
Saskatchewan Municipal Leaders

Today

Issue #7 May 2002

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Message from the Deputy Minister



Deputy Minister Brent Cotter

By now most of you have received a letter from the Minister responsible for Government Relations explaining the government and department reorganization. I would like to provide you with further details about the reorganization.

But first I'd like to begin by telling you a little bit about myself. I was born in Kamsack, Saskatchewan and completed my high school education in Moose Jaw. I attended the University of Saskatchewan where I

obtained a Bachelor of Commerce degree with honours in marketing. I received a Bachelor of Law degree and a Masters of Law degree from Dalhousie University in Halifax.

I practiced law for a couple of years in Saskatoon before teaching at Dalhousie Law School in 1977. I taught there until 1991. As well, I taught law in Edmonton from 1991-92. From 1992-1997 I served as Saskatchewan's Deputy Minister of Justice and Deputy Attorney General. In July of 1997, I was appointed Deputy Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, as well as Deputy Provincial Secretary. Since April 1st I have been serving as your Deputy Minister of Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs, and Deputy Provincial Secretary.

I look forward to working with all of the municipal leaders in Saskatchewan. I am also pleased to be working with Associate Deputy Minister of Municipal Relations,

continued inside



Saskatchewan
Government Relations
and Aboriginal Affairs

Deputy Minister's Message Continued

Larry Steeves. His experience and knowledge will be an asset in the work we do together with the municipal sector.

The recent government reorganization resulted in a new department, Government Relations and Aboriginal Affairs. This department combines municipal relations, intergovernmental affairs and Aboriginal affairs.

I believe that these changes provide an opportunity to bring together community interests and develop stronger, more effective relationships between local, provincial federal and Aboriginal governments. We will work to establish a more consultative, responsive and open relationship with the municipal sector. The new department structure will also strengthen the ways we approach such matters as treaty land entitlements and infrastructure agreements.

We have already begun to make changes to the organizational structure of Municipal Relations based on discussions with a number of our municipal partners.

MAH's former Community Services Unit is now integrated with the Grants Administration & Provincial-Municipal Relations Branch. We want to ensure that the services being provided to the municipal sector through this branch are effective. And a consultation process is underway to gather input from our staff and from municipal partners on the types and levels of service required to build relations and develop the municipal sector.

Over the coming weeks the department looks forward to receiving input on how our new organization and structure can be supportive of our municipal partners.

We have created a Community Planning branch with work units in Regina and Saskatoon. This branch will be dedicated to support and approval for community planning bylaws.

We have also established a Northern Services branch combining advisory services, community planning and financial services for northern communities.

To assist municipalities in dealing with the reorganization, we have created a directory of contacts for programs and services that I hope you will find useful.

I very much look forward to meeting and working with you in the coming months. I think we have a great opportunity to shape the future together in ways that will benefit all of our citizens.

Infrastructure Support

On April 19th, 2002, Ralph Goodale, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and Government Relations Minister Ron Osika announced funding support through the Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program.

More than \$35 million in federal, provincial and municipal funds were announced for 137 infrastructure projects throughout communities in the province.

The Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program provides up to two-thirds of the eligible costs of infrastructure projects. Communities provide the remaining one-third of the costs, making the program a

unique partnership between all three levels of government.

The first priority for infrastructure investment is "green" municipal projects such as water and wastewater developments and upgrades, solid waste management, recycling and improving the energy efficiency of buildings owned by municipal governments.

The projects announced include:

- \$30.2 million of federal, provincial and municipal funding to upgrade water and wastewater services in 111 municipalities, including 12 in northern Saskatchewan;
- \$279,000 to go toward four solid waste projects;

- \$4.6 million of shared funding for repairs and upgrades to streets and rural roads in 21 municipalities;
- \$264,000 for Maple Creek to upgrade the local airstrip to accommodate access for air ambulance services;

Last year over \$57 million in federal, provincial and municipal funding was approved for 91 projects in municipalities across Saskatchewan.

For a list of the 137 approved Canada-Infrastructure Program projects and more information on the program visit: www.municipal.gov.sk.ca

Meeting the Challenge

Budget 2002 Highlights

"Challenging times demand of us all the courage, vision and leadership, not only to overcome the difficulties of today, but also to plan and prepare the way for a future of hope and prosperity."

Difficult circumstances have never stopped Saskatchewan people from moving forward working together, to build a better future for themselves, their families and their communities."
-2002-03 Budget Speech

The Provincial Government's 2002-03 budget focuses on support for municipalities, infrastructure, health care, education, economic development and continued tax reduction.

Budget highlights include efficiencies through government reorganization, increases in revenue sharing grants to urban, rural and northern municipalities, community-focused initiatives including more money for policing, incentives for ethanol production, more money for health and education, and tax reform measures to build the economy.

Urban, rural and northern municipalities will receive a \$10 million revenue sharing increase this fiscal year. This is an 18.2 per cent increase over the \$55 million last year. Health sees an increase to their budget of 5.8 per cent and education receives an increase of 7.2 per cent.

The 18.2 per cent increase in revenue sharing grants this year is a signal of support for the work municipalities do.

Other provincial initiatives that will benefit municipalities this year include:

- funding for the Transit Assistance for the Disabled Program will increase by \$500,000 this year to \$2.65 million; and
- the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency will receive an additional \$1.67 million this year to develop a new province-wide Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal system and implement the income approach methodology for commercial property assessment. The increase is allocated as follows:
 - \$350,000 additional support to fund SAMA's operations related to the services required for the province, particularly audit services,
 - \$990,000 toward the development of a new province wide Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) system, and
 - \$330,000 towards implementation of the income approach for commercial assessment.

More information and details on this year's Provincial Budget can be found at: www.gov.sk.ca/finance/budget/budget02/2002papers.htm

Consultations

Revenue Sharing

Consultations for distribution of the \$10 million increase in Revenue Sharing Grants for this fiscal year have been finalized.

Urban municipalities will receive the same unconditional revenue sharing grant as in 2000-01 and an increase of \$6.80 per capita.

The increase for rural municipalities is allocated by increasing the Road Preservation and Construction component of the unconditional funding pool. Each rural municipality will receive an increase in the amount received from this component in 2002-03.

The distribution of revenue sharing to northern communities is established in *The Northern Municipalities Revenue Sharing Regulations*.

In the coming months department officials will be consulting with municipal partners to develop new distribution formulae for the Urban, Rural and Northern Revenue Sharing pools.

Transit Assistance for the Disabled

Operating funding for the Transit Assistance for the Disabled (TFD) Program has been increased by \$500,000 in the 2002-03 budget. With the increase, the province intends to move toward a performance-based program so that services provided are funded rather than deficits incurred.

The change in philosophy is intended to encourage municipalities to expand and enhance their special needs transportation services, which will provide better services for people with disabilities.

The consultation process for the redesigned TFD Program has already started. Department officials met with SUMA and the cities to discuss the program options. Both of these groups were asked to provide feedback and updated information to the department by the end of April.

Saskatchewan Municipal Board

Submitted by the Saskatchewan Municipal Board

The Saskatchewan Municipal Board is an administrative tribunal structured to ensure the financial credibility of municipalities and ensure appeals respecting planning, development, tax assessment, fire prevention, municipal boundaries, property maintenance and proposed apportionment schemes not based on unit factors are heard and decided.

Current Board Members

- Wade Armstrong, Chair
- Gord Hubbard, Vice-chair
- Dave Robinson, Member
- Bruno Kossmann, Member

Committee work continues to be handled by:

- Local Government/Property Maintenance Appeals Committees – Marilyn Turanich @ 787-6227 and Janet Stamatinos @787-6230

- Planning Appeals, Fire Prevention Appeals and Municipal Boundary Committees – Barry Fry @ 787-6244
- Assessment Appeals and Condominium Property Act Apportionment Committees – Cindy Schwindt @ 787-2644 and Sandra Sylvester @ 787-2658

Best wishes to Graham McNamee, Chair and John Pass, Vice-chair who retired March 31, 2002.

Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency Board

Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency (SAMA) is an independent agency with responsibility to:

- the Province of Saskatchewan;
- local government (municipalities and school boards); and
- property owners.

Provincial legislation mandates SAMA to:

- develop and maintain the province's assessment policies, standards and procedures;
- audit assessments, and review and confirm municipal assessment rolls; and

- provide property valuation services to local governments (municipalities and school boards).

SAMA has a nine-member Board of Directors, which include:

- three representatives from the provincial government;
- elected representatives of the rural, urban and education sectors; and
- a representative of the professional assessors association.

SAMA's Board of Directors

- Bill Reader, Chair representing the Province
 - Sharon Armstrong representing the Urban Sector
 - Keith Carleton, Vice-Chair representing the Rural Sector
 - Fred Clipsham representing the Urban Sector
 - Richard Douglas representing the Education Sector
 - Patrick Koskie representing the Province
 - Ozdemir Niyazi representing The Saskatchewan Assessors' Association
 - Darryl Senecal representing the Rural Sector
 - Vacant representing the Province
-

Funding for Water Infrastructure

Most communities own their water treatment plants and have traditionally been responsible to budget and plan for regular maintenance, operation of treatment plants and upgrades of infrastructure. Municipalities are also responsible for ensuring their citizens have safe drinking water.

Most communities use their own sources of funds, such as their reserves, property taxes and their water utility rates to cover the costs of providing safe drinking water.

There are three other sources of assistance for communities:

1. Sask Water is being re-focused to provide services to help communities find cost-effective solutions to drinking water supply and treatment issues. Fifty communities have already started working with Sask Water.
2. The Provincial Municipal Financing Corporation (MFC) assists in making capital funds available on flexible borrowing terms at competitive rates. MFC is authorized to finance up to 100 per cent of the total authorized borrowings for sewer and water projects.
3. The Canada-Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program assists communities in improving their infrastructure, including that of water supply and wastewater. Through the program, \$170 million in contributions from the federal, provincial and municipal governments will be invested in local infrastructure. In the first two years of the program more than \$60 million of federal, provincial and municipal funding has been approved for water and wastewater infrastructure projects.

Saskatchewan Watershed Authority

Water is one of our most precious natural resources and ensuring safe and high quality drinking water is much easier if we protect the source.

A watershed, or drainage basin, is all the land that drains runoff to a point on a stream or a lake. The quality of water in a stream reflects the activities and land cover that occur in the stream's watershed. Communities that receive their water from these sources are also affected. Therefore, monitoring water quality is only part of the equation.

To better protect Saskatchewan's water sources, the watershed management roles of Sask Water, Saskatchewan Environment and Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation are being combined to form the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority (SWA).

The SWA will focus on protecting the quality of source water and balance competing water and land uses. The Authority will work with local watershed groups, other government agencies, individuals and existing groups to better manage and identify potential sources of

contamination. Plans will also be developed to minimize the risk to both ground and surface water.

The SWA headquarters will be in Moose Jaw. The existing Regional Water Resources Offices of Sask Water in Weyburn, Swift Current, Yorkton, North Battleford and Nipawin will become part of the Authority.

The SWA will formally be in place by the fall of 2002.

Public Advisory: Unbalanced Snow Loads on Arched Roofs

Submitted by Corrections and Public Safety-Building Standards

Municipalities should be aware of possible problems resulting from unbalanced snow loads on certain types of arched or curved roof structures.

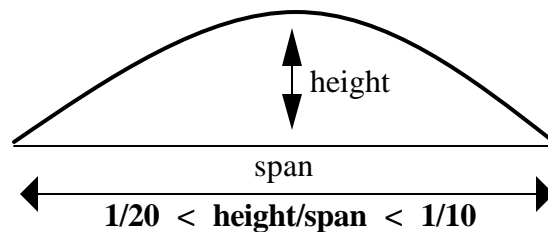
The Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes has issued a special change to the National Building Code of Canada 1995. It has been changed to correct a design shortcoming in long-span arched roofs. This change applies to all types of structures, including wood and steel trusses, glulam arches, corrugated metal, etc. These roofs are often found on industrial and recreational buildings such as curling rinks and skating arenas. The

affected roofs have a roof height-to-span ratio less than 1/10 but greater than 1/20. (Roofs flatter than 1/20 and steeper than 1/10 are unaffected by this special change). Structures of these buildings may not be able to support unbalanced snow loads, and a collapse could occur as a result of drifting on the roof caused by heavy snowfall and high winds.

Owners of long-span arch roofed buildings are advised to have their roofs inspected by a professional engineer to determine whether the structure meets requirements for unbalanced snow loads, and to determine whether and what type of remedial action is required. Until

inspections have been conducted and, if necessary, remedial work completed, owners should avoid using these buildings when heavy snowfall and high wind conditions occur, and when a large buildup of snow remains on the roof.

An information package describing the types of buildings and detailed technical information, provided by the Canadian Commission on Building and Fire Codes, is available at www.nrc.ca/ccbfc/changes/snowloads.shtml. Detailed information regarding the revised snow load design criteria can be obtained by contacting the Canadian Codes Centre by phone at (613) 993-9960 or by e-mail at codes@nrc.ca.



Emergency Preparedness Week

“Keeping Canada Safe – Emergency Preparedness Begins with YOU” is the theme of Emergency Preparedness (EP) Week 2002, held May 6-12.

EP Week is an annual event dedicated to raising Canadians’ awareness of the importance of planning ahead and preparing for

potential emergencies and to building their understanding about how Canada’s emergency management system operates.

EP Week was originally conceived in 1995 as an annual program to build public awareness of Canada’s emergency preparedness principles and system.

This May, take the time to become better informed so that you, your colleagues and your family can make your home, your workplace, your community and your country safer and more disaster resistant.

For more information contact your local Emergency Measures Co-ordinator or visit www.emergencypreparednessweek.ca
