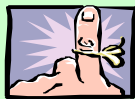




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Have you updated **YOUR** information in the **Municipal Directory On-Line?**



Check it out!

www.municipal.gov.sk.ca

Municipal Relations Division welcomes your feedback on **Municipalities Today**.

Contact us by **phone** at **(306) 787-2739** or **email: muninfo@gr.gov.sk.ca**

Consolidated Municipal Act Update

The Municipalities Act did not pass during the 2004 fall session of the Legislature.

The Municipal Forum Working Committee worked hard on the Bill, which was introduced in the Legislative Assembly on November 19, 2004. It was decided that more consultation and some fine tuning of individual policy issues, is needed.

Government Relations (GR) will take the necessary steps to ensure that the Act is re-introduced during the spring 2005 session of the Legislature.

Consultations are proposed between now and spring 2005, including posting the draft Bill on the Department's website for review.

Government Relations' Minister Len Taylor plans to undertake direct consultations with the municipal sector on the Bill. GR will work with both the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) and the Saskatchewan Association Rural Municipalities (SARM) to have the draft Bill on their websites as well.

SUMA and SARM will also be provided with a CD-ROM of the new Bill and the supporting materials. This material can be duplicated and distributed to municipalities that do not have

internet access. The Municipal Forum Working Committee will stay in place to ensure that any substantive issues raised are reviewed by stakeholders.

GR is working towards January 1, 2006 as a proclamation date for *The Municipalities Act* and is beginning work with the municipal associations and municipal administrator associations to develop a 'preparedness' strategy and education and training program to assist councillors and administrators in the transition to the new Act. This work should occur over the spring, summer and fall of 2005.

Property Tax Tools

Consultations on property tax policy were conducted with local government associations and representatives of the agricultural, residential, oil and gas, commercial/business and other sectors earlier this year.

Minister Len Taylor had announced changes to municipal tax tools with the view to simplifying the property tax system.

The combining of seasonal and residential property classes for the purpose of applying local property tax tools took effect January 1, 2005.

Changes to phase-in of assessment, phase-in of property taxes, and the subclass authority for condominiums, will not proceed at this time. Authority to use these tax tools remains in place for 2005.

Events 2005

Jan. 29-Feb. 2

SUMA's 100th Annual Convention "Bridging to our Future", Saskatoon
http://www.suma.org/modules.php?name=Sections&op=view_article&artid=226

March 7 – 10

SARM Annual Convention, Saskatoon
<http://www.sarm.ca/Events/calendar.htm>

Feature Publications

- Municipal Reserve Options
www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mrd/cpb/cpbmroptions.shtml
- Rural Council Meeting Procedures Guide
- Rural Councillor Handbook

Above are available at:
<http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mrd/mrdpublications.shtml>

Facts

The Athabasca Sand Dunes have a unique ecosystem, rich in rare and endemic (found only here) plants which scientists consider an evolutionary puzzle.

Saskatchewan was the first province in Canada to adopt an air ambulance service.

Source: www.sask2005.ca

Local Government Elections Act Consultations and Amendments

The Department of Government Relations (GR) is proposing to amend *The Local Government Election Act* (LGEA) in the spring of 2005, based on concerns raised by the Saskatchewan Association of City Clerks (SACC). The LGEA provides the legislative authority for urban, city and school division elections.

Key changes address the procedural challenges that have developed with local elections in the context of larger school divisions.

The current LGEA can result in a returning officer from a city (the city clerk) being responsible for an election in a rural community. This causes practical difficulties with conducting the election (e.g. determining and organizing polling places) and increases costs. Similarly, requiring a city council to undertake certain tasks, prior to a school division election being held in a distant community, does not make practical sense.

Amendments are proposed to the LGEA respecting the appointment of returning officers, completion of nomination forms and the declaration of school support.

The amendments will also incorporate the election provisions that are in *The Rural Municipality Act*, as agreed in the Municipal Forum Working Committee. This is part of the transition to the new *Municipalities Act*.

PLANNING MATTERS

Municipal Reserve Options

When required by *The Planning and Development Act, 1983*, a person subdividing land must provide, without compensation, part of the land, or money in lieu of that part of land for municipal reserve. A residential subdivision must dedicate ten per cent of its gross area as municipal reserve, and non-residential subdivisions require five per cent.

There are exemptions from dedication of municipal reserve, including the first lot created from a quarter section, land subdivided into lots of four hectares or more, and land subdivided for correcting or rearranging lot lines.

The purpose of municipal reserve is to provide parks, open space and public recreation facilities. Examples are school playgrounds, a community hall or curling rink.

Dedication of land being subdivided is not always the best option. Alternatives are cash-in-lieu of dedication paid to the municipality, and deferral of dedication until a later phase of subdivision.

Dedicated lands belong to the municipality, and the municipality is responsible for use and maintenance.

More information is provided at <http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mrd/cpb/cpbmroptions.shtml>



Did you know ...

From the MRD website you can access information such as:

From the Journal for Rural Municipalities:

On or before **January 15**, the treasurer/clerk must submit to the local school authority a detailed statement of the account of the municipality with the authority as at December 31 of the preceding year. (392, RMA)

From the Journal for Urban & Northern Municipalities:

On or before **January 15**, the treasurer/clerk must submit to the local school authority a detailed statement of the account of the municipality with the authority as at December 31, (292 UMA) (262 NMA).

For more information from the **Municipal Calendars or Journals** check out:

<http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mrd/muncalendars.shtml>

The MRD website also provides Rural, Urban and Northern sample bylaws for municipalities.

Check out:

<http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mrd/mrdsamplebylaws.shtml>

PLANNING MATTERS

Consultations on Proposed Amendments to

The Planning and Development Act; The Subdivision Regulations; and The Dedicated Lands Regulations

Government Relations is undertaking a two phase review of *The Planning and Development Act, 1983* (the Act). Phase 1 amendments are planned for the Spring 2005 Legislative Session. The amendments focus on providing approving authorities with greater autonomy consistent with the principles of *The Cities Act* (10 of the 13 cities are approving authorities). Proposed amendments will streamline public notice requirements and planning processes, provide greater administrative zoning bylaw flexibility, improve enforcement, and give the minister statutory authority to establish statements of provincial interests. Transparency and public participation in community planning are maintained. Phase 2 of the review will occur in 2005-06 which will be broader in scope with future consultations planned.

In conjunction with the review of the Act, amendments will be considered to *The Subdivision Regulations* and *The Dedicated Lands Regulations*. Amendments to *The Subdivision Regulations* reflect changes arising from the Information Services Corporation registration processes, provide for electronic subdivision applications, and provide a number of housekeeping changes.

Amendments are also required to *The Dedicated Lands Regulations* as a result of proposed amendments to the Act affecting municipal reserves.

The proposed amendments are available on the department's website at <http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mrd/consultations.shtml>

If you have any questions contact: Len Kowalko, Acting Director, at (306) 933-5382.

PLANNING MATTERS

Site Suitability for Development or Subdivision

One of the most important aspects to consider when reviewing development proposals and subdivision applications involves whether the site or land is suitable for the intended use. It can be a challenge to explain why development should not occur on hazard lands that are unstable slopes or flood prone.

Natural Resources Canada and Environment Canada websites have guides that help explain why development shouldn't occur on land that is susceptible to landslides or flooding. These websites also have information on ground water systems, flood proofing and heaving clays. Links to these websites can now be found on the Community Planning Branch pages at <http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mun/mrd/cpb/cpbsubindex.shtml>

Annual Municipal Financial Reporting

With the festive season behind us, the start of a new year brings new beginnings, new hopes and new resolutions. Municipal administrators and treasurers will be thinking about their New Year's resolutions. They will be busy completing their general ledgers, accounting reconciliations, adjusting entries, booking auditors and preparing T4s. Yes indeed, the one resolution that can truly make an accountant happy is a finished financial statement.

Municipal legislation (cities, rural, urban and northern Acts) requires each municipality to submit a copy of the audited 2004 financial statement and management letter to the Minister at:

(for cities, urban and rural municipalities)
Grant Administration and Provincial-Municipal Relations Branch
Saskatchewan Government Relations
410 – 1855 Victoria Avenue
REGINA SK S4P 3V7

(for northern municipalities)
Northern Municipal Services
Saskatchewan Government Relations
P.O. Box 5000
LA RONGE SK S0J 1L0

Deadlines for receiving the Financial Statements are:

June 1, 2005 *The Rural Municipality Act*
July 1, 2005 *The Urban Municipality Act*
September 1, 2005 *The Cities Act*
September 1, 2005 *The Northern Municipalities Act*

A sample financial statement and all supporting documents (notes and schedules) can be downloaded from the department website at,

Rural: <http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mrd/rmufinancial.shtml>
Urban: <http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mrd/umufinancial.shtml>
Northern: <http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mrd/nmufinancial.shtml>