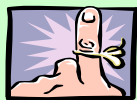




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Have you updated **YOUR** information in the **Municipal Directory On-Line?**



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The Commercial Building Incentive Program

The Commercial Building Incentive Program (CBIP) is a program of the Government of Canada available until March 31st, 2007. CBIP encourages building owners to design highly energy efficient buildings and provides technical help, modeling software and incentive funding of up to \$60,000 per building to do so.

CBIP buildings typically save between 25% and 50% on annual energy costs -- the "average" CBIP building is presently saving about 35%.

It applies to all commercial buildings, public and private, from a municipal building or school to an ice rink or multi-unit residential building. Over 40 CBIP buildings have already been completed in Saskatchewan. CBIP is mandatory for provincial government buildings.

For information about the program visit the web site at Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency at: oee.nrcan.gc.ca/newbuildings/cbip.cfm

Kristina Edwards
Phone: 613-943-9227
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Saskatchewan Research Council
(Public sector clients)

Tom MacDermott:
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Appointment of Assistant Deputy Minister, Municipal Relations

Maryellen Carlson joined the department of Government Relations (GR) as Assistant Deputy Minister of Municipal Relations on March 1, 2005.

Maryellen joins GR from the department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization. Her most recent assignment was the Assistant Deputy Minister for the Agricultural Development Division. She joined the Department of Agriculture and Food in April 1997, as Director of the Industry Development Branch. Prior to this, Maryellen worked with the federal government in the Departments of Agriculture and Agri-Food, and Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Maryellen was actively involved in the Action Committee on the Rural Economy (ACRE) designed to identify opportunities for government action to strengthen the rural economy. She sat on a number of industry and association Boards. These include POS Pilot Plant Corporation, Agricultural Credit Corporation of Saskatchewan, Agriculture Development Fund, the Agri-Food Innovation Fund, AgWest Bio Tech, Western Beef Development Centre and the Crop Development Centre.

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Events 2005

March 7th – 10th

SARM Annual Convention,
Saskatoon

www.sarm.ca/Events/calendar.htm

March 15th

Municipal Leadership
Development Program Workshops:
Module 2 - Planning for Success
Herbert School, Herbert

March 22nd

Municipal Leadership
Development Program Workshops:
Module 4 - Human Resources in
the Municipal Workplace
Community Center, Marshall

March 23rd

Municipal Leadership
Development Program Workshops:
Module 3 - Municipal Economic
Development Fundamentals
Community Center, St. Louis

March 24th

Municipal Leadership
Development Program Workshops:
Module 5 - Public Relations and
Communications for
Municipalities
Legion Hall, Ogema

March 29th

Municipal Leadership
Development Program Workshops:
Module 4 - Human Resources in
the Municipal Workplace
Uniplex, Humboldt

March 30th

Municipal Leadership
Development Program Workshops:
Module 2 - Planning for Success
Tisdale RecPlex, Tisdale

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Maryellen grew up on a grain farm in East Central Saskatchewan and is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan.

Provincial Education Property Tax Credit Program

The Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA), the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM), the Saskatchewan School Boards Association and the departments of Saskatchewan Learning and Government Relations (GR) participated in a working group to develop options for providing education property tax relief. The group initially met in July, and later met in September 2004, with Minister Len Taylor at the Legislative building. The working group then prepared an options paper that was presented to the Ministers of Saskatchewan Learning and GR in November 2004.

SUMA described the working group's efforts in the October 2004 issue of *The Urban Voice*, and also referred members to the association's website to view the options paper in the November 2004 issue.

The options paper was also immediately posted, following the November meeting, on the GR website at www.municipal.gov.sk.ca under "Publications". In excess of 1400 people accessed the options paper from November 2004 to January 2005 at the GR website.

Taking into account the options developed by the working group, government decided that \$110 million in education property tax relief would be delivered as a property tax credit in 2005 and 2006. A property tax credit was one of the working group's options, originally suggested by SUMA. Residential and agricultural property owners and most businesses will see an 8% reduction in current school property taxes. Commercial, industrial and multi-unit residential (excluding residential condominium) properties will be capped at a \$2,500 reduction annually.

Since municipalities levy and collect property taxes on behalf of school divisions, the program will be administered locally by municipalities, as proposed by SUMA and SARM. Property owners will receive education property tax credits as calculated by municipalities and shown on tax notices.

Municipal associations, the cities and tax roll software vendors were contacted immediately following the credit program's announcement. GR and Saskatchewan Learning staff have worked with the municipal associations, tax roll software vendors and the major cities to answer their questions and provide clarification of the fine points of the program. Implementation

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Feature Publications

- Appealing Your Property Assessment
- A Guide to Organized Hamlets
- Municipal Bylaw Guide
- Street Names
- Urban Revenue Sharing Grant Distribution
- Municipal Nuisance Guide
- Municipal Property Tax Tools Guide
- Urban Municipal Mill Rate Return
- Road Closures & Leases
- Street Closures
- The Saskatchewan Time System (A Scientific and Historical Background)
- Stray Animals Guide
- Conflict of Interest (Pecuniary Interest) Guidelines

These documents can be found on the MRD website at:

www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mrd/gapmr/index_pmr.shtml

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

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

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details have been worked out with the local government associations, tax roll software vendors and the major cities.

Once the credit is calculated based on the current school property tax levy, the credit will not be adjusted. For example, credit adjustments will not be made for the following reasons:

- Supplementary assessments
- Assessment appeals
- Corrections of assessment errors
- Changes resulting from an assessment audit
- Property tax cancellations
- Tax phase-in

In other words, the credit is applied when taxes are levied for the year and any changes to assessments or property taxes from that point forward are not included for the credit purposes. These decisions were made to ensure ease of administration of the credit and to avoid there being additional time and cost implications for municipalities.

If prepayment/preliminary tax notices based on the previous year assessment and tax rate are issued by the municipality, the credit may or may not be applied at that time (municipality's discretion). In any case, the credit reported to the school division must be based on current assessments and school property tax rates.

Saskatchewan Learning will cover the costs associated with updating tax roll programming and changing

tax notice forms, as necessary.

Tax roll software vendors and the major cities have been contacted in this regard. Provincial funding is intended to ensure that municipalities are not charged for the costs of tax roll software updates. In addition to covering these costs for computerized municipalities, Saskatchewan Learning will allocate funding to municipalities with manual/paper based tax roll systems.

The funding for municipalities with manual/paper based tax roll systems recognizes that additional labour costs associated with entering the credit information on the tax roll and on tax notices could be significant compared to the municipality's usual tax roll and tax notice preparation costs. If your municipality has a manual/paper based tax roll and you have contacted GR to be included on the list, Saskatchewan Learning will call your municipality to discuss this funding.

In order to provide the authority and details for the education property tax credit program, Saskatchewan Learning is currently drafting a separate bill (and regulation) for consideration in the spring 2005 Legislative session. The bill will be drafted so that it is retroactive to January 1, 2005.

GR sent an information package by e-mail to municipalities in late January. A hardcopy of the

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package was mailed out to municipalities that do not have an e-mail address. If you or your taxpayers have specific questions regarding the education property tax credit, please contact Don Sangster at Saskatchewan Learning at (306) 787-2793.

Facts

Toward the end of the nineteenth century an organization was formed for the purpose of providing literature to settlers living in isolated homesteads in the North-West Territories.

Known as the Aberdeen Association, this society eventually grew to become, in its day, the largest and most important free circulating library in Canada.

The Canadian Pacific Railway, a number of steamship companies and the Canadian Post Office carried the material free of charge. The idea for the association was originally proposed by the Countess of Aberdeen, whose husband, the Earl of Aberdeen, was Governor General of Canada from 1893 to 1899.

In November, 1890, they organized The Lady Aberdeen Association for Distribution of Literature to Settlers in the West.

On January 12, 1891, the first distribution of literature took place. Eighty-two packages were sent out to settlers in the West.

In 1893, Lord Aberdeen became Governor General of Canada, and he and Lady Aberdeen came to live in this country.

In that year, the name of the society was changed to the Aberdeen Association, and the central office was moved to Ottawa.

Source: www.sask2005.ca

Minister's Consultations on the Consolidated Municipal Act

At the Municipal Forum on December 20, 2004, Government Relations (GR) Minister Len Taylor committed to undertake direct consultations with the municipal sector on the draft Bill for *The Municipalities Act* (MA).

Consultations were held from February 9 -12, 2005 in Weyburn, Aberdeen, Wilkie and Humboldt. The meetings were open to the public and letters of invitation were sent to all municipal councils. GR officials held additional consultations, at the request of groups of municipalities in Swift Current and Naicam, later in February. The Minister was unable to attend these presentations.

The four initial consultations held by the Minister were attended by a total of 167 people representing 94 municipalities, including 53 RMs, 25 Towns and 16 Villages. There was press and media coverage of the sessions in Weyburn and Humboldt and a total of 6 Opposition MLAs attended the various sessions. In addition, several members of both the MA Working Committee and the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association's (SUMA) Town and Village Legislative Review Committee were in attendance at various sessions.

Discussion at the consultations was open, positive, respectful and constructive. Those in attendance

were supportive of the overall intent and direction of the new Act. Some people asked for clarification of various features of the proposed Act, such as the public notice policy, loans and guarantees to non profit corporations, conflict of interest provisions, rural election procedures and the role of the Saskatchewan Municipal Board with respect to debt and borrowing.

No concerns, however, were raised with how the MA handled these matters. There were suggestions for refinements related to petitions for public meetings that GR will take forward to the MA Working Committee.

Concerns were expressed regarding the January 1, 2006 date for the Act to come into force, and whether municipalities could implement the new Act by this date. Minister Taylor alleviated these concerns by clarifying that not all of a municipality's bylaws need to be replaced as a result of the MA, and that there are in fact only a few new bylaws that need to be in place when the new Act comes into force. This target has been set in response to the municipal associations' request.

In addition, the MA Preparedness Committee and the participation of the municipal associations in this committee in delivering training and resources, was noted by councilors and administrators as being extremely important and useful in ensuring municipalities are prepared to come under, and comfortable with, the new Act.

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In general, it appeared that most people attended the sessions to obtain a greater understanding of the new legislation, as opposed to raising issues with it, and in this respect the consultations proved to be very useful and well received.

Facts

On August 8, 1961, the largest lake trout ever taken in North America (as of 1967), weighing 102 pounds was caught in a commercial operation at Lake Athabaska. The girth of the fish was 44 inches.

Source: www.sask2005.ca

The Centennial Fund – Canada Celebrates Saskatchewan

The Centennial Fund - Canada Celebrates Saskatchewan is a federal program for communities to access some funding for Saskatchewan's Centennial. The program in Saskatchewan is looked after by Western Economic Development.

For more information on this program contact: (306) 975-6559 or 1-888-338-9378 or see the website at: www.wd.gc.ca



Local Government Administration Program Undergoes Changes

Since 1966, urban and rural municipal administrators in Saskatchewan have received their formal training through the University of Regina's Certificate in Local Government Administration (LGA) program. Offered by correspondence through the Credit Studies Division of the Centre for Continuing Education, the LGA program takes its direction from an advisory body consisting of the Urban Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan (UMAAS), The Rural Municipal Administrators' Association (RMAA) and their respective Boards of Examiners as well as members of SARM, SUMA and the Department of Government Relations.

According to the above advisory groups, Saskatchewan is facing the loss of 145 administrators to retirement in the next 7 years. To address the issue of the recruitment and retention of municipal administrators, the University of Regina has approved significant changes to the LGA program to ensure that the LGA program accurately reflects its purpose, content and value within both the University and the wider community.

Changes to the program (effective May 1, 2005) include:

- Revision to the program name from "Certificate in Local

Government Administration" to "Certificate in Local Government Authority."

- LGA courses will carry 1.5 credit hours so that students will be able to use LGA courses as electives within the Faculty of Arts at the University of Regina after May 2005.
- Additional minor changes in course names and course content for Fall 2005 as courses are revised to reflect current legislation and municipal practices.

For more information on these changes as well as upcoming course offerings, please visit the Credit Studies Division's LGA website at:

www.uregina.ca/cce/creditstudies or phone (306) 585-5807

Dr. Christine Crowe
Head, Credit Studies Division
Centre for Continuing Education
University of Regina

Facts

The word 'Assiniboia' is derived from 'Assiniboine,' a Saulteaux term meaning 'one who cooks with heated stones'. The name was first applied to the Red River Colony in 1869 when Louis Riel's provisional government called itself the Assembly of the District of Assiniboia.

Source: www.sask2005.ca

Assistance with Voluntary Municipal Restructuring Initiatives

On occasion Government Relations receives inquiries from municipalities interested in municipal restructuring. To assist councils in exploring their restructuring options, Government Relations has partnered with the municipal associations to offer the following resources:

- *A Guide to Voluntary Municipal Restructuring* was developed in partnership with New North, SARM, SUMA, RMAA, UMAAS and Government Relations to help meet the changing needs of Saskatchewan municipalities. It provides information to assist municipal councils to determine if restructuring is right for them and offers a step-by-step overview of the restructuring process. The Guide can be found on our website at:
www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mrd/tocvolmunstr.shtml.

For more information, you may contact:

Michael Hayes, Boundary Officer,
Community Planning
phone (306) 787-2162 or
email at mhayes@gr.gov.sk.ca

Financial assistance is available to municipalities through funding provided by Government Relations and administered by SARM. SARM was provided with \$50,000 to establish a fund to assist those rural municipalities interested in:

- undertaking a restructuring study;

- implementing a restructuring agreement;
- reverting an urban municipality into a rural municipality; and,
- establishing a shared office space and administrator.

Information on this program is available on the SARM website at www.sarm.ca/Policy/documents/03-07-07VoluntaryRestructuring.htm or you may contact SARM by: phone (306) 757-3577 or email at sarm@sarm.ca

Update on Federal New Deal

The federal Budget 2005 includes gas tax funding of \$5 billion to be provided over five years to the provinces and territories. The federal commitment to sharing the gas tax revenue is a permanent arrangement. Saskatchewan municipalities will receive \$147.7 million over five years with yearly funding of \$59.1 million by the fifth year. The amount to be received in each of the five years is detailed in the following table:

	Total Federal Funding (\$M)	Estimated Saskatchewan Share (\$M)
2005-06	600	17.7
2006-07	600	17.7
2007-08	800	23.6
2008-09	1,000	29.5
2009-10	2,000	59.1

The federal money will be distributed to the provinces and territories on a per capita basis. Funds will be made available to cities and communities according to the terms of New Deal agreements to be negotiated by the federal government with each province and territory.

Funding will flow to provinces and territories once bi-lateral agreements are signed that will ensure the funds are received by municipalities promptly, and are targeted to sustainable development. The federal government continues to plan for negotiation of bi-lateral agreements with each of the provinces and territories in the next few months.

The federal New Deal also includes a separate allocation of \$62.5 million over five years for First Nation communities. The funding will be delivered in consultation with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and First Nations stakeholders.

The Municipal Forum New Deal Working Committee continues to meet to achieve consensus regarding how the New Deal should unfold in this province. The work of this group will play a key role in Saskatchewan's New Deal negotiations.

