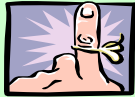




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Have you updated **YOUR** information in the **Municipal Directory On-Line?**



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

Contact us by **phone:**

**(306) 787-4340** or

**email:** [muninfo@gr.gov.sk.ca](mailto:muninfo@gr.gov.sk.ca)

### Federal 'New Deal' update

Negotiations between the federal and provincial governments regarding the federal 'New Deal' and gas tax funding for municipalities are nearly complete. A draft of the bilateral agreement was discussed at the Municipal Forum on June 29, 2005, and the consensus reached at the Forum has helped to expedite the approval processes of the federal and provincial governments.

The New Deal agreement will see Saskatchewan receive \$147.7 million in federal gas tax funding over five years to support environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure and capacity building projects. Each municipality will be eligible to receive a per capita allocation of the funding provided its proposed projects meet federal environmental outcome criteria. A portion (20%) of a municipality's allocation must be used for projects that demonstrate regional benefits and cooperation.

Government Relations will administer the program and, in doing so, will invite municipal sector participation. Government Relations' administration costs will be recovered from the federal gas tax allocation and represent less than 1.5% of the first five years of funding consistent with the costs of other federal-provincial infrastructure agreements. The province also agrees to build on past actions and work across government and collaboratively with municipalities towards

achieving enhanced community sustainability.

Details regarding the terms of the agreement, what it means for municipalities and what municipalities should be doing to access funds, will be available once the final agreement is signed.

### Comments Wanted on Community Initiatives Fund

Saskatchewan communities are invited to comment on the future of the Community Initiatives Fund. The deadline is September 15, 2005. The fund distributes part of the profits from the Regina and Moose Jaw Casinos for the benefit of Saskatchewan people and communities. The existing three-year plan to guide how the funds will be used ends on March 31, 2006. Communities can respond to the Call for Comment summary of questions posted on Culture, Youth and Recreation's website at [www.cyr.gov.sk.ca/cifopinion.html](http://www.cyr.gov.sk.ca/cifopinion.html).

### Events

Municipalities Act Workshop dates:

Sept. 19 - North Battleford  
Sept. 20 - Saskatoon  
Sept. 21 - Kelvington  
Sept. 22 - Kipling  
Oct. 05 - Moose Jaw  
Oct. 06 - Swift Current

If you are interested in registering for one of these workshops, follow this link

<http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mrd/gapmr/Training.shtml> and click on the Municipalities Act Workshops – Information Bulletin.

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## Saskbiz Website

The Saskbiz website ([www.saskbiz.ca](http://www.saskbiz.ca)) is aimed at providing comprehensive economic development information about Saskatchewan's regions and communities. The site has been designed to support investment attraction, site selection, economic planning, opportunity identification, and community and business development and retention.

The mapping capabilities of the website provide users with a unique tool for retrieving information and data for the smallest geographical areas possible, and for a variety of regional boundaries. The analytical functions are convenient and easy-to-use, yet extremely powerful in putting a wealth of information at the user's fingertips.

The Department of Industry and Resources is sending a letter to all municipalities in Saskatchewan to invite you to update your Community Profile on Saskbiz, or, if you have not already done so, to contribute a profile about your community. The Saskbiz website was launched in 2003 and you may have provided a profile at that time. You now have the opportunity to update your profile so that website users have the most up-to-date information about your community, especially in this Centennial year.

There is no charge for putting your profile on the website. Take this opportunity to boast about your community to website users all over the world.

## Public Reporting on Municipal Waterworks Regulations

In response to the April 2002 Report of the Commission of Inquiry into North Battleford's drinking water, the provincial government adopted its Safe Drinking Water Strategy to ensure safe drinking water for the people of Saskatchewan.

As part of this strategy, Saskatchewan Government Relations is establishing municipal waterworks regulations. In 2002, legislative changes were made that provided authority for these regulations. *The Cities Act* and *The Municipalities Act* include this authority. These regulations will require municipalities to establish for their waterworks a rate policy and capital investment strategy by July 1, 2006.

The following waterworks information will have to be made available to the public, at the municipal office, beginning September 1, 2006:

- the council's rate policy and capital investment strategy;
- annual waterworks revenues, expenditures and debt payments, and the extent that revenues cover expenditures and debt payments;
- reserves;
- the waterworks assessment prepared under *The Waterworks Regulations, 2002*;
- waterworks capital plans and planned related sources of funding; and a copy of third party waterworks contracts.

Each year, municipalities must also directly inform consumers of the annual waterworks revenues, expenditures and debt payments, the extent that revenues cover expenditures and debt payments, and of the information that is available at the municipal office. Most of the information to be made available to the public is from existing municipal sources, such as financial statements, waterworks assessments required by Saskatchewan Environment and waterworks capital plans.

The regulations encourage municipalities to establish, over the long run, waterworks rates that cover waterworks costs, including capital costs, and to have capital plans in place so that they can provide safe drinking water, and to provide ratepayers with information on their waterworks. The regulations will not require municipalities to establish rates at a certain level or operate at cost recovery.

The regulations will apply to waterworks in municipalities that supply water through a distribution system and are owned by a municipality or established under a public utility board, or where a municipality is a partner in or part of a cooperative of a waterworks. They will not apply to smaller waterworks in municipalities that are approved by Saskatchewan Environment as hygienic systems. Water from hygienic systems is not for human consumption. Many of the waterworks in rural municipalities are hygienic systems and will be exempt under the regulations. Many of the cities already report waterworks information to their residents.