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Message from Deputy Minister Lily Stonehouse

I'm pleased to have this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Deputy Minister (DM) of Government Relations.

Saskatchewan has always been my home with the exception of three years living in the Northwest Territories. Born and raised in Maple Creek, where my father, John Humphries, was a town Councillor for 30 years, I now live outside of Regina in the Condie area with my husband Robin. Our children Jeffrey and Marya are both away at university.

I assumed the position of DM of Government Relations effective June 1, 2006. Prior to this I was DM of Saskatchewan Environment for three years in which I became familiar with SUMA, SARM and SANC and municipal issues related to water and waste management.

A civil servant since 1993, I also held the positions of:

- Associate Deputy Minister, Saskatchewan Learning, and

- Assistant Deputy Minister, Saskatchewan Post Secondary Education and Skills Training

Through these experiences, I've become committed to government, business and community working together to ensure that economic, social, cultural and environmental considerations are integrated in major decisions and initiatives.

I look forward to working closely with our local governments and municipal stakeholders.

Consultations on Liability Review Committee Report to continue with local government sector

Further to the article in May's issue of *Municipalities Today*, Government Relations has moved ahead on the consultation strategy and process for the final report of the Municipal Liability Review Committee.

This strategy involves a three-stage consultation process with government departments, legal and insurance industry stakeholders, and the local government sector. Because many of the committee recommendations propose changes that have the potential to affect a broad cross-section of stakeholders and groups, the consultations are intended to

facilitate open and frank discussion and feedback on the liability issues reviewed, and the recommendations made with respect to each issue.

Government Relations has followed up on the distribution of the committee report with meetings with the first two sets of stakeholders – internal to government and legal/insurance industry stakeholders. The committee's report has also been distributed to the municipal sector and some feedback has been received through meetings of the Municipal Forum and the city mayors/managers group.

Government Relations is now preparing a summary of the feedback received to date and will be undertaking consultation meetings with local government associations shortly. Government Relations felt it important to complete the first two consultation stages and report the results of these consultations to the local government sector, including what concerns were raised, in conjunction with consulting this sector on the recommendations of the committee. This will ensure the proponents of the changes are informed of all stakeholder positions.

The results of all the consultations will inform government's process of approving, preparing and advancing any legislative changes.

If you have any comments or questions regarding the consultation process, or if you would like a copy of the review committee report, please contact Rod Nasewich in Government Relations at (306) 787-2738 or by email at: rnasewich@gr.gov.sk.ca The report is also available on the Municipal Relations Division web site at <http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/publications/pdf/policy/liabilityreview.pdf>

MLDP program review

The Municipal Leadership Development Program (MLDP) has been providing modules for Saskatchewan municipal leaders for three full years. In that time over 800 people have participated in one or more of the five modules offered by the program and over 75 people have successfully completed all five modules.

The MLDP Advisory Committee is conducting a complete review of the program. The intent of the review is to assess the success of the program to date as well as assisting with future development. In order to complete the review, SIGMA ANALYTICS has been contracted to complete a survey of program participants. If you have participated in an MLDP module you should receive a copy of the survey.

The survey will be delivered via E-mail for those participants for whom we have E-mail addresses.

For others, it will be delivered via fax to your municipal office. If you do not receive a copy of the survey, please contact Kristin Dowler, MLDP Administrator, at 761-3731.

We are asking that you take the 15 minutes required to complete the survey. It will greatly assist us in better understanding the program's existing strengths and weaknesses as well as potential options for the future. The complete program review should be done in fall 2006.

Water reporting regulations

As noted in previous issues of *Municipalities Today* and in consultation with municipal associations, regulations were established that require municipalities to establish a waterworks pricing policy and capital investment strategy by July 1, 2006, and to annually provide key waterworks financial information to the public beginning September 1, 2006.

These Regulations **do not apply to:**

- smaller waterworks that are classified by Saskatchewan Environment as "hygienic systems" – water from hygienic systems is not for human consumption
- single stand-alone municipal wells
- bulk water delivered by truck
- sewage works
- communities that Saskatchewan Environment has exempted from having to

complete a waterworks assessment

The Regulations **do 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 network.

If council cannot meet these deadlines, section 404 of *The Municipalities Act* provides a mechanism where council has the authority to pass a bylaw to extend the time up to 90 days. An Extension of Time Bylaw must be passed within 30 days after the time fixed in the Act or Regulations. The time specified in the Bylaw is as valid as if it had been done within the time fixed in the Regulations.

Planning & Development Act Review

During late May and early June, Government Relations conducted 16 Open Houses across the province. Traversing over 7,000 kilometres of the province our staff met with folks as far north as Buffalo Narrows and south as Maple Creek and Estevan. We heard support for the review of *The Planning and Development Act, 1983* to address the existing and emerging needs of communities. The need for resources and expertise was clearly articulated. Representatives from various communities felt strongly that future planning would support

economic development opportunities. Attendees challenged department staff of Government Relations with thoughtful and insightful questions around the application of the Act to planning and development issues.

Government Relations continues to seek public input on the review of *The Planning and Development Act, 1983* until July 30, 2006. If you would like an opportunity to comment, you may download a copy of the report *Building a Sustainable Future* and submit the questionnaire on line at

<http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/div/cpb/ongoingpandactreview.htm>
1. Hard copies can also be obtained from the Community Planning Branch offices in Regina and Saskatoon.

Your comments are appreciated and all information received through the consultation process will be taken into consideration in the finalization of the background document and preparation of legislative amendments. Review Committee meetings are expected to resume in September.

Municipal Forum News



Government Relations Minister Harry Van Mulligen (centre) renews the Municipal Forum Letter of Understanding with Don Schlosser, President, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (left) and David Marit, President, Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (right) in Regina on May 25, 2006.