

TECHNOLOGY

- 45 per cent of schools (includes First Nations schools) now have high-speed Internet connection (exceeds the target of 30 per cent)
- 6.5 per cent of health facilities now have high-speed Internet connection
- SaskTel now offers high-speed Internet to 46 communities (up from 8 communities)
- On-line access to all legislative documents is now available free of charge
- The new automated corporate registry system, including enhancements to one-stop business registrations, will be implemented in spring/summer 2002

REDUCING TAXES

- Overall provincial taxes paid by an average family are now fifth lowest in Canada (from second highest in 1993)
- An estimated 55,000 low income taxpayers are being removed from the income tax rolls
- Saskatchewan's top marginal personal income tax rate is now second only to Alberta
- Saskatchewan's small business tax rate is now sixth lowest in the country (was second highest)

- Full indexation of the personal income tax system, which provides inflation protection for Saskatchewan taxpayers, has already begun and will be completed in 2003
- Education tax credit doubled in 2001 to \$400 per month for full-time students and \$120 per month for part-time students to recognize rising non-tuition costs for post-secondary students
- Saskatchewan is one of only five provinces to increase the small business income tax threshold
- A new tax credit will promote mineral exploration and development in the North
- Additional targeted incentives in support of the resource sector have been put in place
- Professionals are now allowed to incorporate their practices

NEXT STEPS...

- Tax reform will continue in 2002 and 2003 with already legislated reductions in personal income tax rates.
- Government is on track to meet its commitments. Tax reductions to date amount to about 60 per cent (\$150M) of tax reform's total estimated tax reduction of \$260M. Additional tax reductions in 2002 and 2003 will provide remaining 40 per cent (\$110M).
- The average family's income taxes have been reduced by about \$660 so far. Another \$340 will be provided over the next two years, bringing the total income tax reduction for the average family to about \$1,000.

Connecting To The Future

The 2001-02 Budget focused on "Connecting to the Future" to give Saskatchewan people the tools they need to plug-in, participate, communicate and compete. The Budget outlined significant investments organized around three key themes:

- **Education** – the largest investment ever in education, post-secondary education and skills training – \$1.1 billion
- **Transportation** – the launch of an historic three-year, \$900 million investment in roads and highways
- **Technology** – the cornerstone of the Government's information technology plan is CommunityNet – a six-year, \$71 million project to connect schools, post-secondary institutions and health facilities in 366 communities with a high-speed network. The Government will also modernize its technological infrastructure – creating Saskatchewan's digital E-Government system

In addition, the 2001-02 Budget reduced small business tax rates, continued implementation of the personal income tax reform package introduced the previous year, and enhanced several tax credits.

Six months into the fiscal year, Government is on track to meet a number of key commitments made in the 2001-02 Budget.

Budget Update Facts

As of October 31, 2001

For more information, please visit the
Department of Finance website at:
www.gov.sk.ca/finance
Just click on Provincial Budget

EDUCATION

- 38 new Community Schools established to date, with a total of 42 by the end of the year; this will double the number of Community Schools at the start of the year
- Enhanced training capacity for information technology related programs at the universities and SIAST (20 new seats at SIAST in the 2002-03 fiscal year; 30 new computer science seats at the U of S and 20 to 25 new seats at the U of R for this year)
- A virtual Saskatchewan Campus is being established which will use technologies such as the Internet, multimedia and televised delivery; 70-80 courses will be available by the end of March 2002 and a further 60-70 will be under development
- 1,673 additional summer jobs for secondary and post-secondary students planning to return to school (target was 1,500)
- 312 Centennial Merit Scholarships provided to date for first year [high achievement] university students at public institutions (target is 325)
- 27 students enrolled in the first session of the Northern Health Access Program

42 Additional Community Schools in 2001-02 *

Archbishop M.C. O'Neill High School, Regina
Balcarres School, Balcarres
Bedford Road Collegiate, Saskatoon
Bert Fox Composite High, Fort Qu'Appelle
Big River High School, Big River
Bishop Klein School, Saskatoon
Carlyle Elementary School, Carlyle
Carpenter High School, Meadow Lake
Cochrane High School, Regina
Connaught Elementary, North Battleford
Dr. Brass Elementary, Yorkton
Father Gorman Elementary School, Lloydminster
Fort Qu'Appelle Elementary, Fort Qu'Appelle
Jack Kemp School, Lloydminster
John Paul II Collegiate, North Battleford
Jubilee Elementary, Meadow Lake
Lakeview Elementary School, Meadow Lake
Leask School, Leask
McDermid School, Regina
Mount Royal Collegiate, Saskatoon
North Battleford Comprehensive, North Battleford
Nutana Collegiate, Saskatoon
Prince Arthur School, Moose Jaw
Punnichy School, Punnichy
Riverview Collegiate/Empire School, Moose Jaw
Rosemont School, Regina
Scott Collegiate, Regina
St. Goretti School, Saskatoon
St. Mary High, Prince Albert
Stobard Elementary School, Duck Lake
Stobard High School, Duck Lake
T.D. Michel Elementary School, Big River
Victoria School, Kamsack
Vincent Massey School, Saskatoon
Wagner School, Nipawin
Wascana School, Regina
Wesmore School, Prince Albert
West View School, Prince Albert

* 4 other schools to be named

TRANSPORTATION

- On schedule to twin Highway No. 1 west by fall of 2004 – 20 km completed and officially opened October 25, 2001 and another 24 km under construction this fall
- On schedule to twin Highway No. 1 east by 2012 and Highway No. 16 between North Battleford and Lloydminster by 2010 – 33.4 km completed and opened on Highway No. 1 east and 16.8 km to be opened on Highway No. 16 (subject to weather)
- Anticipate completing 315 km of pavement resurfacing (compared to target of 380 km)
- Anticipate upgrading over 300 km of TMS highways to granular pavements (compared to target of 300 km) – major projects include 45 km of Highway No. 155 and 20 km of Highway No. 4 north of Cadillac
- Improvements to northern roads and highways – completed the Turnor Lake access road, completed Highway No. 951 and the Waterhen Access Road
- The province is committed to upgrading TMS links to support regional highway corridor development – six strategic highway corridors, like Highway No. 4 from Cadillac to Swift Current, are now at a pavement standard
- Improved safety through expanded mowing and signing programs (approximately 25% increase)
- More front-line operational staff compared to 2000-01 – 46 additional summer students and 14 Centennial students (a 50% increase); with the students there were 110 more operational staff working on highways this summer (a 6.8% increase)
- Delivered a \$61.6 million budget increase for Highways with no increase in administrative staff or administrative costs
- \$3.7 million of Centenary Fund initiatives are underway or completed - including improvements to internal park roadways, relocation of Highway No. 11 and Grasswood Road intersection, designating Highway No. 11 as Louis Riel Trail and the Centenary Enhanced Tourism Signing Program
- Together with 51 different partners under the Strategic Rural Roads Partnership Program, 30 projects are underway to upgrade more than 500 km of low volume provincial highways