



Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association  
Unit 305 4741 Parliament Avenue  
Regina, SK S4W 0T9  
306-525-3727

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Saskatchewan's Urban Municipalities Gather for the 2024 SUMA Convention and Tradeshow**

From April 14-17, over 1000 representatives from Saskatchewan's cities, towns, villages, resort villages, and northern municipalities will come together for the 2024 SUMA Convention and Tradeshow at the REAL District in Regina.

Through Convention 2024, delegates will reconnect with colleagues, focus on new ideas, network with SUMA and provincial decision makers, and reflect on municipal issues. This year, the Premier, Minister of Government Relations, Leader of the Official Opposition, and FCM's President will all speak at the event. Delegates will also attend education sessions, and browse over 200 booths in the Municipal Marketplace presented by Kinetic GPO.

This year's Keynote speaker, David Colletto is the Chair, CEO and founder of Abacus Data, and an adjunct professor at Carleton University. David brings two decades of experience in market research, strategy, and public policy, and years of research in measuring public opinion related to housing and quality of life. Through his speech, David will bring a fresh perspective to Saskatchewan's urban municipalities who are faced with the rising costs of living due to inflation, climate change, and widespread mental health and addictions problems. David's previous work with FCM (Federated Canadian Municipalities) and the Canadian Real Estate Association will also provide insight into the situation across the country. SUMA is thrilled to have David join us for this year's Convention.

Also, at Convention 2024, SaskTel will be making an announcement about broadband access in Saskatchewan's urban centres. As co-chair of the SBAC (Saskatchewan Broadband Action Committee), SUMA has long been advocating for improved, equal access to internet. We're pleased that SaskTel has chosen Convention as the venue to make their announcement.

Media are welcome at Convention but must check in at the registration desk to receive a name badge for admission. Important events, including the President's Address and Premier's Address, are also available to the media via livestream on SUMA's YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/@SUMASask](http://www.youtube.com/@SUMASask)). To access Convention or materials connected to it, media are encouraged to fill out the [media accreditation form](#).

For more information visit [www.suma.org](http://www.suma.org), or to arrange an interview please contact:

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Attachments:  
Important Convention 2024 Events  
SUMA Service Awards

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## Important Convention 2024 Events

\* Sessions that will be livestreamed to the public and available on SUMA's YouTube channel.

### ***Monday, April 15***

Official Opening Ceremonies*	8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.
President's Address *	9:15 a.m. – 9:25 a.m.
FCM Address*	9:25 a.m. – 9:35 a.m.
Media Conference	9:45 a.m.
Premier's Address*	11:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Resolutions*	3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

### ***Tuesday, April 16***

Leader of the Official Opposition's Address*	10:45 a.m. – 11:05 a.m.
Keynote Address – David Colletto	11:50 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.
Minister of Government Relations' Address*	1:10 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Saskatchewan Municipal Awards*	1:30 p.m. – 2:05 p.m.

### ***Wednesday, April 17***

Bear Pit with Provincial Cabinet*	10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
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# Service Awards

Every year at the President's Banquet and Awards Ceremony, the SUMA Board of Directors recognizes individuals from across the province who have demonstrated a commitment to outstanding service in the municipal field.

Through the awards program, SUMA acknowledges the contribution of individuals in the municipal field to an improved quality of life in their communities and to the advancement of local government in our province.

The SUMA Board accepts nominations from communities and councils throughout the province. The individuals nominated are considered the most deserving of recognition for their outstanding service to their communities.

On behalf of all SUMA members, we are proud to honour these individuals for their outstanding contributions to the development and prosperity of our communities and urban governments in Saskatchewan.

## ***Meritorious Service Award***

Meritorious service awards are granted to municipal staff members with 20 or more years of service. It recognizes their career success, dedication, and involvement in their local communities.

These award recipients are outstanding individuals who have become role models in their communities. Through their long service, they have made a valuable contribution to the success of their municipalities. They strive for an improved quality of life through a strong local government.

- Blaine Becker, Town of Maple Creek, 27 years
- Jamie Blakley, Town of Maple Creek, 20 years
- Wayne Burton, Town of Maple Creek, 40 years
- Shane Drosky, City of Yorkton, 20 years
- Wayne Erlandson, City of Swift Current, 20 years
- Trent Empey, Town of Maple Creek, 29 years
- Yvonne Gobolos, Town of Cudworth, 30 years
- Bruce Goff, Village of Lipton, 40 years
- Rob Hanson, Town of Moosomin, 36 years
- Craig Huber, Village of Lipton, 28 years
- George Kerr, City of Weyburn, 47 years
- Chad Krause, City of Swift Current, 20 years
- Josip Knezevic, Town of Biggar, 20 years
- Lynne Lemieux, Town of Ponteix, 22 years



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- Darryl McKay, Town of Moosomin, 28 years
- Cory McMahon, Town of Biggar, 29 years
- Peter Nabholz, Town of Moosomin, 25 years
- Greg Parsons, City of Swift Current, 20 years
- Lawrence Paschke, Town of Tisdale, 32 years
- Donette Richter, City of Weyburn, 30 years
- Raymond Silbernagel, Town of Biggar, 20 years
- Nicole Spent, City of Swift Current, 20 years
- Shawn Stephen, Town of Moosomin, 25 years
- Keith Stork, Town of Maple Creek, 30 years
- Ron Walker, Town of Colonsay, 43 years

### ***Honorary Service Award***

Honorary Service Awards are granted to elected officials throughout the province with 20 or more years of service. It recognizes their long-term dedication to, and involvement in, their local communities.

These award recipients are individuals who demonstrate leadership in their communities and who strive for an improved quality of life. Their generous contributions of time and talent have strengthened their local governments.

- Verne Barber, Town of Lumsden, 21 years
- Sandra Bathgate, Town of Central Butte, 26 years
- Linda Brown, Village of Consul, 30 years
- Robert Chittenden, Village of Montemartre, 21 years
- Chris Davidson, Town of Moosomin, 20 years
- Carol Epp, Town of Langham, 24 years
- Sandra Gilbert, Town of Big River, 22 years
- Thomas (David) Hardy, Town of Marshall, 27 years
- Patricia Jackson, Town of Kipling, 20 years
- Norm Jones, Village of Windthorst, 27 years
- Michele LeBlanc, Town of Pense, 24 years
- Mike Kaminski, Village of Invermay, 39 years
- Rhonda Kapell, Village of Windthorst, 21 years
- Bryan Matheson, Town of Lumsden, 20 years
- Betty Lou Palko, Town of Hudson Bay, 20 years
- Howard Slack, Town of White City, 20 years
- Cecil Snyder, Town of White City, 20 years
- Walter Streelasky, City of Melville, 24 years
- Edward Struthers, Town of Ogema, 35 years
- George Tomporowski, Town of Shellbrook, 23 years



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- Anthony Walliser, Town of Colonsay, 22 years

### ***Scoop Lewry Award***

Keith Comstock started his long career in Saskatchewan's civil service in 1979, working first in corrections. In 1984, he, landed the first of his several "dream jobs" as a regional consultant for the Department of Culture and Youth.

In this role, Keith spent the next several years working with communities, recreation boards, sports organizations, and arts councils in the Lloydminster area, allowing him to fulfill a goal of getting back into community development while remaining in the civil service.

A substantial re-organization of the ministry provided Keith with his second "dream job" opportunity – serving as the province's lead on the cultural industries file. It was during this time that Keith led the work on the drafting of – The Film Employment Tax Credit Act. Keith describes this as one of the proudest moments of his career, noting that this sort of initiative was entirely new ground for both the ministry and the province's film industry.

Following this success, Keith took advantage of the opportunity to spend more time on the regulation and legislation side of Government, which led to his being hired as the Policy Manager for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing.

It was in this role that Keith led and participated in the work on the Acts that many of us are very familiar with – the Cities Act, the Municipalities Act, and the Northern Municipalities Act. It was during this time that government started to use a much different and more collaborative process for consultations on legislation and regulations which eventually led to the approach used today.

The next "dream job" opportunity came when Keith became the executive director of the Strategy and Sector Relations branch, and it was here that Keith played a key role in the development of another valuable municipal resource – leading the ministry team that designed the Municipal Revenue Sharing Program.

For the last eight years of his career in the civil service, Keith's dream job was as Assistant Deputy Minister of Government Relations, responsible for advisory services, sector relations, community planning, and northern municipalities. It was in this role that Keith worked with all levels of government – municipal, provincial, and federal – typically in the realm of infrastructure and program development.

In 2019, Keith retired after 40 years with the civil service. Overall, he is proud of the work he did during that time to modernize the legislative landscape for municipalities. At the beginning of his career, it was a very prescriptive and rule-bound set of guidelines. By the time he retired, it was close to the realm we all know today – a much more permissive landscape that allows for creativity and ingenuity at the local council level.



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Despite being officially retired; Keith now works part time at Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy (JSGS) and is still helping shape the municipal world. He's recently guided the work of developing a three-day comprehensive training course on governance at the municipal level. Once completed, this certificate course provides participants with the knowledge of how to effectively govern their communities, and to Keith's knowledge, is the first time all the different aspects of governance and education training have come together in one course.

Beyond his accomplished career, Keith is, in his words, a "serial volunteer", having been raised in rural Saskatchewan where everyone learned that volunteerism is a critical part of how we can give back to our communities and province. He has served on the University of Regina Rams' Football Club board, is an honorary life member of the Saskatchewan Association of Recreational Professionals (where he has been a member since 1978 and served as president in 1989), is a member of the board of the Technical Safety Authority of Saskatchewan and is the Chair of the Board of the Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan.

Congratulations on receiving SUMA's 2024 Scoop Lewry Award, Keith.

### ***Life Membership Award***

In 2006, Mike O'Donnell ran for council in the city of Regina to be a part of and influence the community, and to look after the people who call Regina home.

Mike spent 14 years serving Regina as Ward 8 councillor, sitting four consecutive terms before electing not to seek re-election in 2020. During his time on council, there were many notable moments and accomplishments for the city, but two that Mike holds close are his opportunity to chair two national infrastructure summits, and chairing the host committee for the Olympic Torch Relay - an event that saw 10,000 attendees, including the president and CEO of the 2010 Vancouver Olympic Organizing Committee, John Furlong.

Mike chaired the Infrastructure Summit when the federal government announced they would change the funding method for infrastructure and give money directly to municipalities. Everyone in municipal government understands the importance of having municipal voices at the table and for municipalities to have as much say as possible in the matters that affect them directly. Infrastructure is one of those matters.

Other notable accomplishments during Mike's time at the City of Regina council table included coordinating the partnership and financing for Leibel Field, a state of the art facility for outdoor football and soccer currently valued at \$11 million; championing a review and change to school zone safety; chairing the Henry Baker Scholarship Committee, where Regina city council recognized 17 post-secondary students with



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\$2,000 scholarships; chairing the finance committee for development and construction of Mosaic stadium; chairing the Regina Planning Commission for nine years; championing the Smart Cities approach and being an early promoter of sustainable development for the City, and spending 12 years as a member of the Board for the Wascana Centre Authority.

Mike joined the SUMA Board of Directors in 2012, spending eight years in that role and serving on the Executive for a number of those. He was a well-known face at SUMA's annual convention, moderating the Bear Pit with government officials for a few years before transitioning to chair the Resolutions committee, and therefore serving as a moderator at the Resolutions session.

With his federal experience, it was a natural transition for Mike to sit on the board of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, as well. He considered his five years' experience on that board to be an excellent opportunity to bring back information to both his local council and the SUMA board, and in that way, ensure that municipalities in Saskatchewan had a say in what was going on at the federal level.

In 2022 and 2023, Mike chaired the Community and Social Impact Regina committee for the City of Regina. This committee is an arm's length entity whose mandate is to bring together non-profit agencies in a coordinated effort to combat domestic violence, food insecurity, racism and drug and alcohol addictions. That entity is now operational, and their first coordinated effort is to have a street team operational in Regina's downtown 24 hours a day and 7 days a week to deal with people in that area suffering from addictions and mental health issues.

A lifelong volunteer, Mike began coaching neighbourhood teams at 18. Throughout his career as a teacher, he coached at the high school and university levels. For Mike, it was not about winning or losing, rather, giving the kids the experience of being a part of a team. He has received several awards relating to coaching, including the Saskatchewan Highschool's Athletic Association's Merit Award (x2), Prairie Thunder Football Club Community Award, Regina Rams coaching staff of the year Award, the Wascana Kiwanis Dad of the Year, and was inducted into the Regina Sports Hall of Fame as a builder in 2021.

Congratulations on receiving SUMA's 2024 Life Membership Award, Mike.

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