



A MESSAGE FROM THE Interim President

Notes from the February Board Meeting

As SUMA's Interim President, it is an honour to present you with this update from the SUMA Board of Directors meeting on February 18. I was acclaimed Interim President during Friday's meeting as we said farewell to outgoing SUMA President Mayor Rodger Hayward.

Mayor Hayward announced in December that he would be resigning from the position of President, effective February 18, as he was presented with an exciting new job opportunity. We will definitely miss Mayor Hayward, who has been a member of the SUMA Board of Directors for 12 years, first serving as Northeast Regional Director, then Vice-President of Towns, and most recently, SUMA President. The SUMA Board of Directors wishes him all the best in his future endeavors, and we hope to still see him at convention as he continues to represent the Town of Naicam.

I will represent SUMA's interests until you, our membership, **elect a new President** on **April 5** at SUMA's 2022 Convention and Tradeshow.

Changes to COVID-19 Precautions at Convention 2022

With less than two months until SUMA's 2022 Convention and Tradeshow, Convention was of course a topic of conversation at our meeting. During Friday's meeting, the Board of Directors made the decision to follow the direction of the provincial government and **remove masking and proof of vaccination requirements for Convention 2022**. However, while we are removing the masking mandate, Convention is a **mask friendly event** and we encourage mask use while respecting individual choices regarding masks based on one's own risk assessment.

We know that not everyone will be comfortable attending Convention, so we have added in **virtual debate and voting options** for elected officials for **Resolutions**, the **Election of SUMA President**, and the **SUMA AGM**. More information on this online option, as well as information on the precautions we will be taking at Convention, can be found in the updated **COVID-19 and Convention FAQ**. SUMA will also be livestreaming select sessions. More information on livestreaming will be sent out in mid-March.

SUMA Advocating on Mental Health and Addictions

One of our Convention sessions focuses on mental health and addictions, and on Friday, SUMA's Board of Directors decided to make **mental health and addictions** a **cornerstone advocacy issue for SUMA**. The COVID-19 pandemic has compounded mental health and addictions issues, which were already a critical crisis in communities across Saskatchewan and Canada. In a recent study from the Angus Reid Institute, one in

three Canadians said they are struggling with their mental health. The number of Saskatchewan people suspected to have died from drug toxicity in 2021 is more than double the number from two years ago.

While mental health and social services are primarily provincial responsibilities, Saskatchewan's hometowns are dealing with complications that arise from mental health and addictions issues in the province. Mental health and addictions can be linked to other files that SUMA has been active on and that members have brought forward, from **policing** to **access to health services** in small communities, **ambulance services**, and **suicide prevention**.

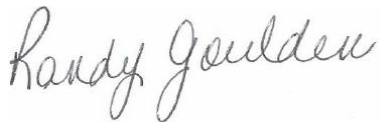
Selecting mental health and addictions as our cornerstone advocacy issue does not mean that SUMA stops advocating for other issues important to Saskatchewan's hometowns. It just means that we bring up the issues relating to mental health and addictions at every opportunity. SUMA's last cornerstone issue was Municipal Revenue Sharing.

SUMA Resolutions at Convention

Related to our new cornerstone issue is policing, and the SUMA Board of Directors has approved **two SUMA sponsored resolutions** to be brought forward at Convention. The resolutions **focus on policing costs** and the federal government absorbing costs for retroactive salary increases and the costs of body worn cameras. You will see these two resolutions, as well as the member submitted resolutions in your resolutions package. The resolutions package, along with your AGM package and SUMA's annual report, will be sent out this week.

The **next full SUMA Board of Directors Meeting** is taking place on **June 17**.

I hope to see you at the 2022 SUMA Convention and Tradeshow in April.



Randy Goulden
SUMA Interim President