

URBAN*Voice*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SASKATCHEWAN URBAN MUNICIPALITIES ASSOCIATION

Saskatchewan's Urban Agenda



ELECTION EDITION

Urban Infrastructure
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Civic Engagement 2.0 Kindersley's Youth Council

By Dawn M. Barker

When the Kindersley town council began its strategic planning process in 2006, they couldn't have imagined the widespread effects their efforts would have, reaching even the municipality's youngest citizens and garnering the town a Saskatchewan Municipal Award.

One of the findings the community recommendations brought forth during the pre-planning procedures was that youth felt disengaged and bored – the lack of things for young people to do in rural communities is a common issue.

"As council developed the strategic plan, they started to look at what other towns were doing to address these problems," said Wayne Gibson, Kindersley's Culture and Youth Coordinator. "Other communities were taking a different approach to the youth council idea, having one young person sit on council, or using teen mentorship of municipal administration." These methods didn't quite fit what Kindersley council felt was needed in their community, though, so they replicated their own youth council, and hired a culture and youth coordinator to assist them.

The council is made up of six students ranging from grade eight to 10, and one grade 11 council advisor. Currently (in its second annual term), the council is comprised of Cory Shields (grade eight), Patrick Johnson and Jenna Kirtzinger (grade nine), and Brynn Colby, Alyssa Sautner and Nikuia

Vogel (grade 10). Tenille Kirtzinger, a member of council last year was allowed to stay on as the senior advisor, because of her interest in the council. Youth council members have to be nominated (with five names supporting their application), and are then elected in a democratic procedure.

The council meets monthly, just like the municipal council, and the council members are expected to fulfill their duties in addition to their other commitments such as school work, jobs and extracurricular activities.

"It does get busy," said youth council Mayor Patrick Johnston. "I find I spend a lot of time writing speeches."

As well as representing Kindersley youth at public events, the youth council has taken an active leadership role in organizing events such as the Centennial Week, historical walk and a concert featuring such well-known artists as the Stereos, Cody Prevost and Jeff Straker.

"It has made me much more interested in leadership," Kirtzinger said.

"It gives everyone something to do. As a kid, you're not bored," added Shields. "It's been a lot of fun."

Reaction to the youth council has been very favourable, Gibson said. Community support for the events has been strong, and the interest in the youth council itself may have benefits long into the future – several of the council members have said they may consider municipal administration as a career choice, or may choose to run on municipal council some day.

The Kindersley Youth Council was chosen to receive the Community Development Leadership Award at the 2011 Saskatchewan Municipal Awards (SMA). The SMA is a program partnership between the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, New North, the Rural Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan (RMAA) and the Urban Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan (UMAAS).



Members of Kindersley's youth council were on hand to receive a Saskatchewan Municipal Award in May

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Inside

VOLUME 16 NUMBER 5 • OCTOBER 2011

- 4** President's Voice
- 6** Recycling - Getting Better at Managing Waste
- 9** Creating Tax Room for Investing in Local Priorities
- 11** With More People Calling Saskatchewan Home, Houses in Short Supply
- 14** Urban Infrastructure
- 17** Braun Agro
- 18** SUMAdvantage
- 19** Building Assets & Opportunities

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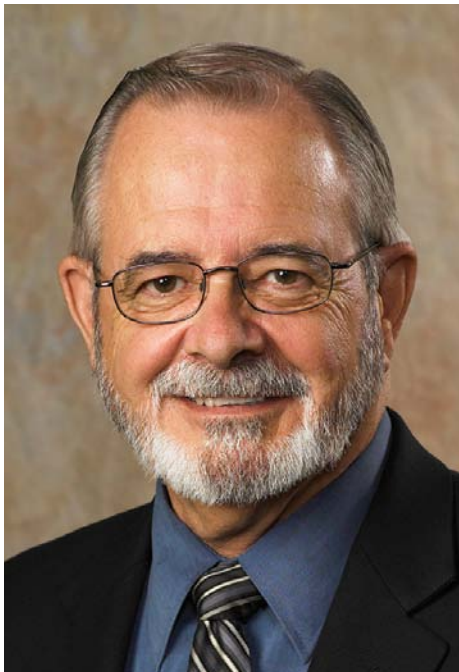


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President's *Voice*



Saskatchewan has long been considered a rural and agricultural province. Postcards in local gas stations portray pastoral images of combines working fields beneath never ending blue skies. In reality, our postcards should show office buildings, manufacturing plants, research facilities, and residential subdivisions or shopping centres. This is the new Saskatchewan.

Our cities, towns and villages are key components of this new Saskatchewan and they are vital to the economic

prosperity of this province. As our economy grows, our urban centres increasingly provide the cultural and recreational pursuits, medical and educational needs, and basic necessities that build a quality of life expected by Canadians. These opportunities attract people. Right now in the province, over 80 per cent of residents live in an urban centre. This in turn helps to create economic growth and social progress.

Within Saskatchewan, the percentage of economic activity and growth occurring within urban centres is increasing exponentially. Building permits are up, and recently a company in Langbank announced a \$7.5 million expansion to their manufacturing plant. In the larger centres, there is even more growth, as exemplified by recent reports stating that Saskatoon and Regina are two of the fastest growing cities in the country.

While it is good news, this does create some challenges for urban governments. Many urban centres are struggling to both rehabilitate and build new infrastructure such as roadways, water systems and recreation facilities. Several projects looking at municipal infrastructure have shown some frightening numbers. In the Town of Shellbrook the projected

annual deficit for their sanitary sewer system is nearly \$5.5 million and in my hometown of Dalmeny, nearly \$2.3 million is required to replace roadways to resident's expected level of service. These are critical pieces to maintaining the momentum of a growing economy. Without a sound network of infrastructure, the economic loss to the province could be tremendous.

Another aspect of economic growth is typically an influx of people looking for new opportunities. These new residents need a place to call home that is livable and affordable. As a result of the growth, the inventory of affordable market and rental housing in this province is at record low levels. This situation creates a whole new problem for urban governments. Camper towns are being set up and residents are calling upon their local governments to tackle the lack of housing. Unfortunately, while they realize that a lack of housing has a significant impact on the local economy and social environment, this is an issue that urban governments simply do not have the capacity or the responsibility to address.

The only way urban governments can generate the funding needed to address these issues is through the local property tax base. In Saskatchewan,

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that tax base has to cover the cost of providing municipal services and funding a portion of the K-12 education. The province's reliance on the property owner to pay for K-12 education has meant urban governments can't increase their rates to cover the infrastructure issues, because the burden on the local rate payer would simply be too great.

For urban governments to get the funding they need to tackle local issues, they need, as a starting point, to be able to employ the full property tax base. The solution is to have the province assume 100 per cent of education funding. This would create the additional taxation room so councils could ensure local priorities are met.

Urban centres are important to the provincial economy. Without the tools and resources to operate and ensure

the structures are there for growth, the province could lose out on many opportunities. The numerous challenges that urban governments face cannot be solved by themselves; therefore, it is important that the provincial government work with urban governments to address these issues, and maintain the economic momentum the province is experiencing.

By working collaboratively through a strong government-to-government relationship, we should be able to find solutions to these challenges. This relationship has produced many positive outcomes thus far. The Municipal Sector Strategic Plan, a centralized approach to addressing local concerns, has established a reliable process under which provincial and local administrations can work together. The development of the Municipal Operating Grant, the long term program that

transfers the equivalent of one full point of PST revenue to local governments in recognition of the services they provide to the residents of this province, is another example. It is important that this relationship continues to grow so we can together build a stronger Saskatchewan.

That's why SUMA has prepared this special election issue of the Urban Voice. As an increasingly urban province, it is time that our provincial public policy focus is on how best to build our incredible success story. We believe this shift begins with the introduction of Saskatchewan's Urban Agenda. Join with us in calling for this to be the major policy focus during Saskatchewan's next four years.



Allan Earle, President

Call for Resolutions: 107th Annual SUMA Convention

Members are encouraged to submit resolutions anytime in the year, but the *deadline for the receipt of council resolutions for the 2012 Convention is November 18, 2011.*

Late resolutions will be reviewed by the Resolutions Committee but only those considered to be newly emergent and urgent will be presented to the Convention as emergency resolutions. Other late resolutions could be sponsored by the Board of Directors or considered after Convention.

Resolution Procedures

Submissions should be forwarded to the Resolutions Committee at the SUMA office via email to: smceachern@suma.org. The Committee – and SUMA's policy committees – will review the resolutions, combine similar ones, and provide a package to all members prior to year end.

All resolutions must be submitted with confirmation of endorsement by Council (with date of resolution included). Resolutions should also be accompanied by background information. Municipalities will be contacted if the Committee requires more than minor editing of the resolution.

The Resolutions Committee will determine the order in which resolutions are presented at the Convention. SUMA bylaws dictate that issues of purely local interest are not appropriate for presentation at Convention, and resolutions will not be accepted from third party individuals or organizations unless endorsed by a member council.

Thank You!

Thanks are extended to the SUMA Golf Tournament organizing committee in Melfort, for hosting an excellent event in August.

In total, 72 people attended what turned out to be a hotly contested race to the top. At the end of the game, two teams were tied, and had to have a chip off to determine who would go home with the first place designation. The chip off was between Rodney Audette (Village of Bethune) and Keith Matheson (Town of Birch Hills). To view photos of the participants and winning teams, visit: <http://suma.org/index.php?p=2011> Golf Tournament

Recycling: Getting Better at Managing

Introduction:

Urban governments provide many vital services for their citizens. One of the most vital of these is solid waste management. Solid waste management is about more than simply taking out the trash; it is about building healthy communities and preserving our natural habitat. In addition, effective waste management can bring about new economic opportunities.

Solid Waste Management in Saskatchewan:

The approach to managing solid waste in Saskatchewan has changed considerably over time. Previous generations produced mostly organic waste. As society advanced, so has the waste it produces. Today's waste contains non-organic materials from products manufactured to have a finite usable life, some of which can be hazardous to human and environmental health if disposed of improperly.

The first line of response for urban governments to today's waste challenges is through employing "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle" methodology. Recycling programs do more than prevent toxins from contaminating the soil and groundwater; they divert waste from landfills, and thereby extend the lifespan of these facilities. Currently, residential waste accounts for approximately 36 per cent of the total waste generated. Thirty-three per cent of the total waste is classified as paper waste (Figure 1)¹.

Median costs to operate a landfill range from \$25 per tonne to \$48 per tonne, and these costs will likely increase substantially as new and stricter regulations are introduced by federal and provincial governments². With new technologies, the waste generated today can be transformed into tomorrow's new material. In many cases, recycling can be more efficient than extracting new resources³, reducing energy consumption and decreasing the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere.

However, the lack of a province-wide recycling program means that only 24 per cent of Saskatchewan recyclers recycle all of their waste, compared to the national average of 52 per cent. More than one-quarter of households in Saskatchewan had no access to paper, glass, plastic and metal recycling. Saskatchewan, tied with New Brunswick for having the second lowest access to recycling programs in Canada in 2007⁴. However, research shows that people would recycle more if convenient access to recycling and active recycling programs were available to them⁵. If given access to recycling programs, 63 per cent of Canadian households were more likely to recycle their paper and

74 per cent of households would consider recycling glass waste⁶.

Why recycling is an issue:

Saskatchewan residents have limited access to recycling because:

- urban municipal recycling programs are very costly to operate, and
- urban governments currently bear the entire financial burden of these.

Manufacturers are not responsible for the collection and disposal of used products. This missing link puts property taxpayers in the position of subsidizing waste producers, and places financial responsibility exclusively on urban governments.

SUMA has long advocated for a policy that will fix this missing link, and toward this end, has worked with the Government of Saskatchewan to develop a Multi-Material Recycling Program (MMRP) for the four most common residential waste materials: paper, glass, plastic and metal. The MMRP is based on the principles of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). These principles encourage "an environmental policy approach in which a producer's responsibility for a product is extended to the post-consumer stage of its life cycle"⁷. Under EPR, producers "accept significant responsibility (financial and physical) for the treatment or disposal of post-consumer products"⁸. The Saskatchewan Waste Electronic Equipment Program (SWEEP) is one example of a successful EPR program in Saskatchewan.

SWEEP is a non-profit corporation established in 2007 to coordinate the collection of used electronics, such as computers, TVs, home audio equipment and printers. A board of directors including representatives from businesses, municipalities and community members governs the program. Citizens can drop off their unwanted equipment at one of 71 SARCAN locations in Saskatchewan, which cover 93% of the population. Since its creation, SWEEP has collected and processed over 13,000,000 pounds of waste electronics – millions of pounds of waste electronic are successfully diverted from landfills⁹.

Urban governments see EPR as a catalyst for industry, which will receive financial incentives to eliminate waste at its source, to improve operations and reduce packaging¹⁰. This will result in less waste within landfills, and fewer toxins

Managing Waste

leaching into the environment. Under the MMRP, greater consideration would be given to the full life cycle costs of materials, and disposal costs for such materials would be shifted from urban governments to manufacturers. Ultimately, this “polluter pay” system stops the download of recycling costs onto urban governments and property taxpayers.

Recent Progress:

In 2007, the provincial government reiterated its position that sustainable waste management is a priority for Saskatchewan, and identified MMRP as part of Saskatchewan’s Green Strategy. In 2010, the government began the consultation process to design the MMRP, setting an implementation target of 2011. The Ministry of Environment invited SUMA to be members of the Project Advisory Committee that would be consulted on the development of program regulations and governance model.

The ministry proposed that an industry-only board of directors of the Stewardship Responsibility Organization (SRO) should govern the MMRP. The SRO would be responsible for developing a program plan and managing financial reimbursement to municipalities. The proposed program would be based on industry and municipalities cost sharing, with industry contributing 75 per cent and municipalities contributing the remaining 25 per cent. The program would target household paper, glass, tin and plastic materials, but exclude beverage containers and industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) waste. This is because SARCAN already manages beverage containers and private waste collection companies handle most ICI in larger urban centres.

In terms of service delivery, the ministry has proposed that any municipality with a population of 25,000 and over would receive funding for curbside collection services, while smaller municipalities would receive funding to operate depot-based recycling programs. These smaller communities have the option to provide higher levels of service if they choose to pay the incremental costs associated with the upgrade.

After several months of working closely with the ministry on designing the MMRP program, the ministry finally decided to delay the implementation to 2012. However, to continue supporting urban municipal recyclers, the ministry extended the Municipal Recycling Bridge Funding Program for Paper and Cardboard to March 2012. This is a joint SUMA – ministry partnership introduced to alleviate the high cost of urban recycling operations. The objective of the program is to sustain the current urban recycling infrastructure, because

Facts & Figures

- Current province-wide stewardship programs:
 - SARCAN Recycling – Bottles and Cans;
 - Saskatchewan Scrap Tire Corporation (SSTC) – Tires;
 - Saskatchewan Waste Electronic Equipment Program – Electronics;
 - Saskatchewan Association for Resource Recovery Corp (SARRC) - Used oil; and
 - Saskatchewan Paint Recycling Program – Used paint.

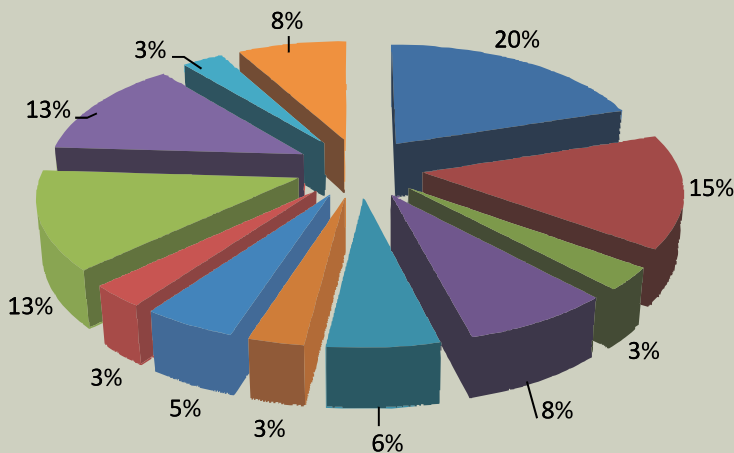
the potential loss of these services would create tremendous challenges for future MMRP implementation. The presence of the MMRP highlights the urgency of municipal recycling, and the fact that urban governments and property taxpayers cannot continue to subsidize garbage that no one wants.

What Urban Governments Want:

With the delay of implementation, and with six years of studying, discussing and planning behind them, urban governments are feeling the squeeze and are displeased with the proposed MMRP model. For a long time, urban governments have advocated for an MMRP that would make waste producers responsible for 100 per cent of the recycling cost, not a 75/25 model that continues to seek municipal garbage subsidization. If the proposed model is to have municipalities pay for 25 per cent of the program, then municipalities must have proportional representation on the board of directors of the SRO. The presence of municipal representation on stewardship programs is a common practice in Saskatchewan, and there is no logical reason why MMRP should be the exception.

We continue to believe that urban governments should determine their levels of service for recycling and we question the reasoning behind MMRP funding larger urban communities differently. SUMA understands the rationale behind excluding ICI; however, the reality is that in many small and medium urban centres, ICI and residential wastes are managed jointly by local government, not the private sector and it would be extremely expensive to separate the two. By excluding all ICI waste completely, the MMRP unintentionally creates service barriers in many urban communities.

Figure 1: Saskatchewan Residential Waste Breakdown



Acronym	Description
ONP	Old newspapers & flyers
& Flyers	
OMG	Old magazines
Tel books	Telephone books
OB	Old boxboard
OCC	Old corrugated cardboard
Mixed	Gable-top containers
Polycoat	e.g. milk cartons
PET	#1 Plastic containers
HDPE	#2 Plastic containers
Steel	Steel or tin cans
Alum	Aluminum cans
Glass	Glass bottles

RECOMMENDATIONS

Saskatchewan needs an MMRP that would work for urban governments in 2012. We feel very strongly that industry must pay for the full cost of the recycling, making producers fully responsible for the entire life cycle of their products and ensuring that recyclables are diverted from our landfills. Property taxes should not subsidize garbage disposal when the materials can be recycled.

Urban representation on the board of directors of the SRO is necessary, especially if the MMRP is based on a cost-shared model between municipalities and industry. SUMA, as the voice of urban Saskatchewan, should have representation on the board to ensure that urban interests are heard and protected.

The MMRP was created to fix the missing link in waste management, not to dictate the role urban governments play in recycling. The current proposal makes uninformed decisions on the exclusion of ICI. SUMA's position is that ICI from small and medium urban centres should be included in the MMRP to prevent disrupting the service needs of businesses in these communities. SUMA is calling on the government to work cooperatively with us to determine criteria that reflects the unique needs of these communities.

SUMA feels the proposed program is also arbitrary, imposing a service standard on urban recycling programs by linking funding with population. Many urban governments under 25,000 people currently offer curbside recycling or a combination of curbside and depots. They should be compensated based on how they operate the program, not their population levels. We urge the provincial government to work with SUMA to re-evaluate the current proposal and to develop an inclusive funding formula that fits local recycling needs.

SUMA will look for the next provincial government to:

- Fully implement the MMRP by the end of 2012;
- Include two urban municipal representatives, appointed by SUMA, on the Board of Directors of SRO;
- Work cooperatively with SUMA to determine criteria that would allow ICI waste to be included in small and medium urban centres; and
- Re-evaluate the current funding proposal to develop an inclusive funding formula that works for all urban governments.



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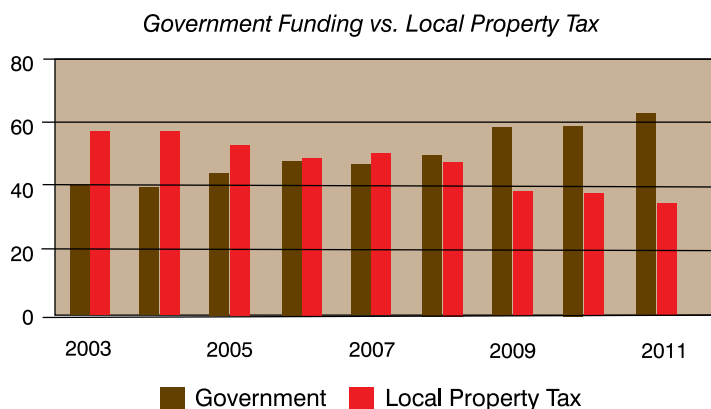
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- 8 Ministry of Environment, Saskatchewan Solid Waste Management Strategy: Consultation paper, 2005, 5.
- 9 SWEEP, SWEEP Highlights.
- 10 CCME, Canada-Wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility, 2009, 3; Maria Kelleher, Janet Robins and John Dixie, Taking Out the Trash: How to Allocate the Costs Fairly, 2005, 6.

Creating Tax Room for Investing in Local Priorities

Saskatchewan has a longstanding history of funding K-12 education through local property taxation. Since 1905, Saskatchewan school divisions, more than those in any other province in Canada, have relied upon this method. From 1989 on, the provincial government has provided a steady 40-46 per cent level of funding¹, the lowest contribution percentage being at 41 per cent in 2001. In 2005, the provincial share began an increase from its previous (2003) 45 per cent level, which has progressed to 65 per cent in 2011.

Successive provincial governments have focused on improving the way in which K-12 education is funded in Saskatchewan. The topic gained prominence in 1997 when the Government of Saskatchewan initiated a province wide reassessment in an attempt to develop a current and accurate system of property taxation. During this process, residents voiced concern about how heavily the property tax system was burdened with funding the K-12 education system.

In 2003, the provincial government appointed a commission led by Ray Boughen (a former mayor of the City of Moose Jaw) to examine K-12 education financing in Saskatchewan. The Boughen Commission recommended that funding be provided by provincial transfers rather than coming from the property tax base. In response, the provincial government pledged to create a long term solution to education funding and created the Education Property Tax Credit (EPTC) that would offer short term relief to all classes of property taxpayers. The \$110 million two year tax credit program which came into effect in 2005, had provided an eight per cent reduction in the education property tax to all property owners.



A further reduction was offered to agricultural land owners in 2006, increasing the total funding for the tax program by \$53

million. This essentially increased the credit for agricultural land to 38 per cent.

All other properties continued to receive the eight per cent reduction. Another increase in funding was allocated in 2007 for residential and commercial properties, shifting the credit for these from eight per cent to ten per cent.

Recent Success

Following the 2007 provincial election, the newly elected provincial government commenced a review of the property tax system in the province. While the review, led by MLA Jim Reiter, was in process the government continued with the credit program, increasing funding by \$48.7 million to a total of \$156.6 million. This increase brought agricultural land credit from 38 per cent to 47 per cent and residential/commercial properties from 10 per cent to 12 per cent. This was the first step in the government's strategy to double the education credit over the next four years.

The property tax review final report, released in 2009, provided four options to resolve this ongoing concern. From those options, the provincial government chose the Ontario model, where a uniform provincial property tax rate for education was set. This decision removed the authority of local school boards to set taxation rates, increased funding from the province's general revenue fund, and saw the elimination of the EPTC.

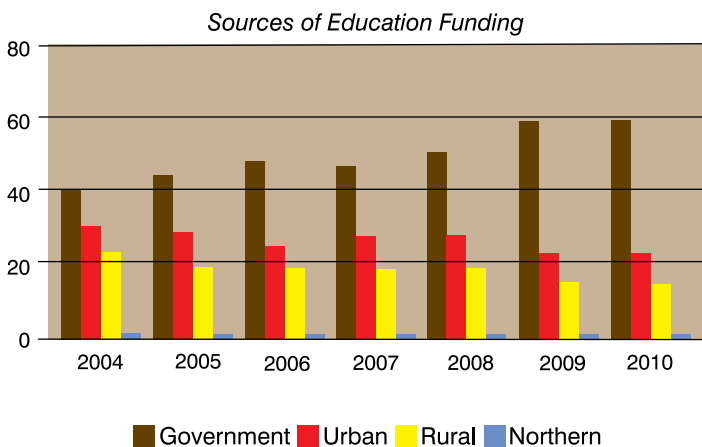
The decision resulted in a total reduction of \$103 million for property owners, and increased the province's contribution of education funding to 63 per cent. In 2011 the province injected an additional \$55.6 million into the program, effectively reducing the education funding burden of residential taxation by 20 per cent and agricultural taxation by 80 per cent. The province is now responsible for covering 65 per cent of the total cost of education funding, with the remaining 35 per cent being generated from property tax. The total levy to be collected from municipalities will be approximately \$579.6 million in 2011; a \$165.7 million reduction from the 2008 levy of \$745.3 million after the EPTC was applied.

Reducing Education Property Tax – Why does it matter?

Although urban governments do not have jurisdiction over K-12 education, properly funded and high quality education impacts our cities, towns and villages. Schools are important to the quality of life of Saskatchewan residents, and they

contribute to the sustainability of urban municipalities. Therefore, K-12 education funding is of interest to urban governments.

Unfortunately, the way education is funded in Saskatchewan is problematic for urban governments. Under the current system, any portion of education not funded by the province must be covered by property owners through property taxation. Previously, local school divisions had been given authority to set education mill rates, which affected the amount of taxes paid by property owners. The portion of property tax required to fund education varied significantly by municipality, and this had a significant effect on a person's decision to move their residence or business to a community. With the recent change by the Ministry of Education to a standardized mill rate, this concern has been eliminated.



The issue still remains, however, that the onus continues to be on the local tax base to cover a portion of education funding. Although the province has made significant progress in reducing its dependence on the property tax to fund education, until such time as they fund 100 per cent of K-12 education, urban governments will continue to lose out on investing in local priorities.

Urban governments in Saskatchewan are restricted to only one major area of own-source revenue – the property tax. This revenue source has limited potential for expansion and does not fully provide the necessary funding needed to invest in urban centres. The Province, in comparison, has multiple sources of revenue such as income taxes, sales

and excise taxes, and royalties. If the education portion of property tax were eliminated, valuable taxation revenue would be available for infrastructure, operational priorities and local improvements.

How have recent changes benefited urban governments?

- Uniform mill rates created a fair playing field in terms of inter-municipal competitiveness for business and investment.
- Lower education tax improved the competitiveness of our communities for out of province business and investment.
- Uniform mill rates ensured the burden is shared equally by property taxpayers – mill rates for different tax classes within a school division should not be dissimilar or burdensome.
- Reduced dependence on the property tax base creates room for urban governments to access additional property tax revenue to fund projects and support growth.
- With the province setting uniform mill rates and working to reduce the funding portion dependant on property tax, perhaps property owners will have a better understanding of who is accountable for education funding.

What do urban governments want in the future?

Urban governments want the provincial government to promise to continue reducing property tax funding for K-12 education. They want to see complete (100 per cent) K-12 education funding from the general revenue fund within four years, entirely eliminating the obligation of education from the property tax base.

SUMA will look for the next provincial government to:

- Completely remove education funding from the property tax in this term; and
- Ensure that staged reductions target urban residential and commercial properties that have not fully benefited from previous reductions.

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Introduction:

While housing is not a responsibility of urban governments, the impact of provincial and federal housing policy decisions are most acutely felt in our urban centres. As such, housing is an urgent priority for the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association and our members. Two housing issues the people of Saskatchewan are concerned about are the high cost of housing across the province (housing affordability) and the availability of housing in urban centres (housing supply).

Housing affordability:

Problems with housing affordability undermine the economic-well-being of urban governments, which are the engines of provincial economic growth, competitiveness and productivity. Rising house prices and rental costs are making it difficult to

attract the workers required to support the economy¹. Since 2007, Saskatchewan's population has been growing at a rate above the national average, to its current high of over one million people². Since new migrants tend to rent before becoming homeowners³, correspondingly, rental affordability for both Regina and Saskatoon – which together represent nearly half the Saskatchewan population⁴ – has dropped since 2007⁵.

Housing is considered to be affordable when it takes up no more than 30-32 per cent of a household's total income⁶. In Saskatchewan today, the average ratio for households is 39.5 per cent⁷, already having reached an unaffordable level. Housing strain will only become more acute – by 2012, an increasing level of economic activity will generate employment growth of two per cent and the net influx of labour to fill those



added positions is expected to continue⁸. In other words, the problem threatens to become worse before it gets better.

Housing availability:

Housing affordability correlates to housing availability – the less availability, the less affordability. Increasing the housing supply is frequently offered as a solution; however, increasing the supply of a single type of housing such as single detached homes, does not fully address the problem. Affordable housing requires the availability of a diverse range of housing types. Different kinds of housing include public-sector funded social housing; private-sector funded market-based housing, tiered-care seniors' housing, health care homes, transition home, and shelter beds.

If one type of housing is available and affordable but not appropriate for the residents' stage of life and appropriate housing is not available or affordable, then community housing needs are not being met. The consequences of unmet housing needs include higher demand on social assistance programs and greater risk to the health and safety of citizens.

Preserving and enhancing existing assets is also a necessary part of a well-rounded strategy to maintain and improve housing availability. For example, "in Saskatchewan urban centres, the rental housing stock has decreased since 2006, and has been in steady decline for the past 15 years⁹" and it has reached the point where rental units are the province's most pressing supply problem¹⁰. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities also identified this problem: "focusing on new supply alone can overlook serious leakage and loss of stock. While adding new housing can help to compensate, it is also effective to explore opportunities to stop this erosion and potentially to intervene in the process that causes this loss by acquiring and preserving existing properties¹¹." As the Association of Saskatchewan REALTORS notes in "Strategic Perspectives on Affordable Housing", "Existing stock is the natural source for affordable housing. Improving existing stock is thus a top priority for affordable housing policy"¹².

The most recent CMHC calculation of Regina's vacancy rate put it at 0.7, which ties Winnipeg for the lowest vacancy rate in the country¹³. When the CMHC's method of calculating the rental vacancy rate is considered, the situation may be even worse¹⁴. With economic and population growth, Regina's housing availability is stretched to its limits.

The responsibility for addressing the challenge of housing availability rests squarely on those that provide housing – the private sector, the non-profit sector, the provincial government, and the federal government. Urban governments have a role to play in creating a land-use planning environment that supports housing innovation, but they have no role to play in building, maintaining, or owning housing stock.

Recent Success:

SUMA has been a leading advocate for the need to address our province's housing needs, and we've found a willing partner in the provincial government. While much work still needs to be done, the province's investment in the creation of an eight-year provincial housing strategy and an annual housing action plan have set the framework by which these challenges can be met.

The Saskatchewan Advantage Housing Plan, announced in March 2011, is one effort the provincial government has made to address housing needs. Through that plan the government announced three new funding programs, and two other initiatives, that together aim to add nearly 4,700 new housing units by 2016.

The private sector – home builders – must also engage constructively in this process. Anecdotal evidence from SUMA members suggests that immediately after the provincial government announced the possibility of \$5,000 rebates for new home construction, prices for lots in some areas jumped by a corresponding amount.

Next Steps:

Housing stakeholders such as the provincial government and the private sector need to take a proactive approach to keep healthy and affordable housing an attainable goal for all Saskatchewan citizens. This means that the housing strategy must be acted on comprehensively and quickly.

In order for the strategy to be effective, all potential partners must be ready to engage in the process. SUMA and its members stand ready to represent the urban interests at play in the housing arena. SUMA members will do their part to create a land-use planning environment that fosters innovation and encourages affordable housing development.

Requiring urban governments to contribute financially to supporting housing programs is the wrong solution. Ultimately, it would mean that property tax payers would have to subsidize the construction of new homes, and that limited urban revenues must be redirected from other pressing priorities. More alarming, property tax increases required to cover these mandatory costs would have a detrimental effect on the affordability of existing properties in the long run. Housing units should be constructed by the private sector. Where minimal public investment is needed to incent that construction, it must come from the provincial or federal governments.

Recommendations:

Saskatchewan needs the provincial government to be proactive in moving the current Housing Strategy for Saskatchewan forward. SUMA, as the voice of urban Saskatchewan, has been a steadfast proponent of the need

for a province-wide housing strategy and wants to see key deliverables successfully achieved from the commitments made in the annual plan. In order to be proactive in pursuing the strategy, SUMA will have to set specific and measurable goals, work towards them, and hold other housing stakeholders to account for their efforts.

Urban governments want to ensure a land-use planning environment that is supportive of housing development and economic growth. Outside of Saskatchewan's cities, many urban governments struggle with the organizational and fiscal capacity to effectively manage their land-use responsibilities. The provincial government must play a more active role in supporting the development of regional planning districts and assisting in the development of Official Community Plans (OCP). OCPs are the basic planning framework around which local affordable housing strategies can be pursued.

The urban use of development levies is frequently criticized by home builders and developers. A development levy is a fee charged to developers for the capital costs of providing some services and infrastructure to new developments. The specifics of the types of services/infrastructure that can be covered are defined by the provincial government through The Planning and Development Act, 2007. Without such levies, existing property owners would be asked to fully subsidize new construction in urban communities. This, of course, would drive up housing costs and negatively impact housing affordability. The provincial government must protect the authority of urban governments to levy development charges.

A logical and primary answer to Saskatchewan's housing challenge is for the private sector to build more stock. While the solution might be easily identifiable, the path to getting there is not. The provincial government must continue to actively identify and reduce barriers for private sector development, particularly of rental housing.

SUMA will look for the next provincial government to:

- Take action promptly and consistently on the housing strategy;
- Support the development of Official Community Plans and regional planning districts across Saskatchewan;
- Protect the urban development levy; and
- Incent the private sector to ensure Saskatchewan communities have a housing stock that assures availability and affordability of housing for all citizens.

- 1 <http://www.enterprisesaskatchewan.ca/enr121010>. Accessed August 29, 2011.
- 2 Bureau of Statistics, Government of Saskatchewan. The population estimate as of April 1, 2011 is 1,053,960. <http://www.stats.gov.sk.ca/>. Accessed August 29, 2011.
- 3 CMHC. *Rental Market Report: Saskatchewan Highlights*. Spring 2011. p. 2.
- 4 As of July 1, 2010, the Saskatoon CMA's population was 265,259 and Regina's CMA population was 215,138 for a combined total of 480,397. "Saskatoon Leads the Nation in Population Growth". February 3, 2011. <http://www.gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=46bc3174-ac65-4d61-929c-3805507933c1> Accessed August 29, 2011.
- 5 CHMC. *Rental Market Report: Regina CMA*. http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64431/64431_2010_A01.pdf?fr=1313686119265 Released Fall 2010. Accessed August 18, 2011 p. 5 table from Statistics Canada Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics, CMHC) and CHMC. *Rental Market Report: Saskatoon CMA*. Released: Fall 2010. http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64443/64443_2010_A01.pdf?fr=1313686121625 accessed August 18, 2011
- 6 CHMC. *2006 Census Housing Series: Issue 12 – Housing Conditions of Households in Canada's Mid-sized Urban Centres (Census Agglomerations)*. Research Highlight. June 2011. Accessed August 18, 2011. p.3.
- 7 For a detached bungalow.
- 8 http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/61500/61500_2011_Q02.pdf?fr=1313684625531. Accessed August 18, 2011. p.7. On February 3, 2011, Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration Minister Rob Norris commented that "Over the next five years, Saskatchewan will need to add nearly 80,000 new workers in order to meet employer demand." <http://www.gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=46bc3174-ac65-4d61-929c-3805507933c1>. Accessed August 29, 2011.
- 9 *The Housing Strategy for Saskatchewan* p.14 citing CMHC, *Rental Market Report: Saskatchewan Highlights* (2008).
- 10 The Association of Saskatchewan REALTORS. Media release regarding the Saskatchewan Housing Strategy Announcement. August 2011. http://www.reginarealtors.com/images/news_releases/2011/asr-news-release-on-housing-strategy-aug-2011.pdf. Accessed August 29, 2011.
- 11 FCM 2008 Action Plan on Housing and Homelessness. p. 14.
- 12 <http://srea.ideapoint.ca/Government%20Relations/ASR%20-%20Affordable%20Housing%20Framing%20Paper%20FINAL.pdf>. Accessed August 29, 2011.
- 13 CMHC. *Rental Market Report: Saskatchewan Highlights*. Spring 2011. p. 2.
- 14 http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/odpub/esub/64431/64431_2010_A01.pdf?fr=1313686119265 Released Fall 2010. Accessed August 18, 2011.

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Unfortunately, after many decades of chronic underfunding, that foundation on which our way of life is built is less solid than it should be. SUMA and its members believe that now is the time to finally address this longstanding problem.

The Problem

Between 1993 and 2008, urban governments in Saskatchewan experienced what amounts to a \$565 million shortfall in operational funding from the provincial government¹. Needing to close the half billion dollar gap, councils were forced to allocate funds previously intended to support infrastructure improvements in order to make sure programs and services kept running. In other words, instead of putting money aside to replace the roof one day, all the local dollars were tied up just keeping the lights and heat on.

As federal and provincial governments began to invest again in urban infrastructure, local councils faced two new challenges: (1) choosing between fixing existing infrastructure or building needed new facilities; and (2) being limited in what could be built by funding restrictions.

As a result of a prolonged funding shortfall and restrictive policies, Saskatchewan's urban governments face a cumulative infrastructure deficit that is likely close to \$3 billion in size².

Today, local councils are faced with the challenge of closing that gap while building for our current and future growth – with only the property tax to fund it.

Unlike other orders of government, urban governments have only one taxation source from which to generate funding – property taxation. Trying to solve the urban infrastructure problem with the property tax is very much like trying to patch the Titanic with duct tape...it's simply not the right solution.

It's hard enough to manage decaying infrastructure without facing changing regulatory standards and increased pressure from climate change. As the standards and conditions under which urban infrastructure evolve, the costs of building and maintaining that infrastructure increase. So the problem actually gets worse and more expensive.

Finally, one must add to the list of concerns the economic imperative for infrastructure investment. Everyone knows that investing in urban infrastructure is a direct catalyst for economic growth. Personal and societal incomes suffer when urban infrastructure faces underinvestment. Building vibrant communities that are attractive to new workers and companies requires revitalization of existing assets and investment in new ones.

With over 80 per cent of Saskatchewan's population living in an urban centre, and with more moving in every day, the

demand for modern, safe, and efficient infrastructure is growing.

Given all of this, it seems clear that urban leaders face extraordinarily difficult decisions against a complex backdrop of competing priorities – and they face these decisions without the resources to address them on their own.

Urban government leaders therefore must continue to work with their provincial and federal partners and ensure that all governments are willing to do their part to ensure our cities, towns, and villages continue to grow and prosper. In Saskatchewan, in recent years, good progress has been made on this front.

Recent Success

Together, the provincial and federal governments have invested nearly \$750 million in Saskatchewan municipalities in the last four years. While some of this investment has gone to support rural governments, much of it has been invested in urban Saskatchewan.

Most of the investment is driven by federal government programs – the Gas Tax, stimulus funding, and the Building Canada Fund. However, the province has been a willing funding partner for most of those programs, and has found some opportunity to provide additional funding.

The Municipal Economic Enhancement Program unconditionally transferred \$100 million to municipal infrastructure in order to keep our economy growing.

The province also has spent in the vicinity of \$10 million to support low-interest loans to municipal governments

Solid Foundation -

through the Saskatchewan Infrastructure Grants Initiative.

SUMA has been working with provincial officials to develop the framework for a long-term, predictable, and sustainable provincial funding stream for urban infrastructure.

The province deserves credit for acknowledging the critical nature of urban infrastructure when it comes to present and future growth in Saskatchewan.

This ad hoc approach to infrastructure funding has allowed urban governments to limp along in the last four years, overcoming our cumulative existing infrastructure deficit and building for the future requires a longer-term sustainable approach.

Dollars and Sense

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development forecasts that meeting the global demand for public infrastructure at a growth rate above three per cent means an annual investment of approximately 2.5 per cent of GDP³. With Saskatchewan's economy projected to grow at more than three per cent per year⁴, and a provincial GDP of \$36.9 billion, 2.5 per cent means a total annual investment of \$738 million for public infrastructure.

Not all of that would be for urban municipal infrastructure – it would also be used for roads, telecommunications, energy, health, education, and other public sector needs. Calculating the urban share of that investment is part of the long-term plan development work that SUMA and others are doing.

According to Statistics Canada, approximately 58 per cent of all public infrastructure in Canada is owned by local governments⁵. We know that approximately 76 per cent of Saskatchewan's GDP is generated in its urban centres (roughly \$28 billion) – so, if we take 2.5 per cent of this GDP (\$700,000,000) and allocate 58 per cent of it to urban-owned infrastructure that total comes to just above \$400 million per year.

So, a basic and generic analysis suggests that the cumulative annual investment needed to manage urban infrastructure in Saskatchewan is \$400 million per year.

What does \$400 million mean for our citizens? Saskatchewan's urban population is approximately 918,295⁶. That translates into \$436 per urban citizen per year.

When you weigh that cost against the personal and societal return on investment we get from urban infrastructure, the cost seems very reasonable.

Why Urban Infrastructure Should Matter To You

Urban infrastructure matters to citizens for a number of important reasons. The most obvious is that it literally forms the foundations of our lives. As explained earlier in this article, practically everything we do is possible because of the infrastructure support our urban governments provide.

In addition to forming the foundation, infrastructure also produces significant positive economic benefits. Return on Investment (ROI) is a commonly used term to determine whether or not the

benefit of an investment outweighs the cost. A positive ROI means the investment may be a good choice. In a time of incredible market turmoil, strong and consistent ROI is difficult to find...unless you're talking about urban infrastructure.

RiskAnalytica suggests that for every dollar more that you pay for infrastructure; you will see \$1.48 back in personal after-tax wages. Try getting that ROI with any other private investment.

A review of Globe Fund benchmark funds suggests the best possible return, over the last ten year period, was indexed funds focused on Canadian small capitalization companies⁷. This investment would have offered an 11.2% return. Urban infrastructure seems like an investment that offers lower risk and better return, an excellent combination in a tough marketplace.

From a societal view, Informetrica Limited estimates that every \$1 billion invested in infrastructure creates 11,000 new jobs⁸. For every dollar invested, federal and provincial governments receive approximately 35 cents in higher income and sales tax revenues. Finally, a \$1 investment in infrastructure delivers approximately 17 cents in savings to the private sector. In the end, everyone wins.

So, let's apply the potential ROI to our projected \$400 million need. If we invest \$400 million annually in urban infrastructure, it may produce: 4,400 new jobs; \$140 million in new revenue for the provincial and federal governments; \$68 million in savings for the private sector; and \$592 million more in after-tax wages for the taxpayers of Saskatchewan – meaning an average increase in after tax wages of more than \$644.

Fixing the Problem

The challenge of urban infrastructure will not be overcome quickly or easily. There is no single solution, and no one order

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of government can resolve it on its own. The key to addressing the growing need is collaboration and innovation.

All orders of government need to recognize the role they play in supporting economic growth and urban development. Achieving our collective goal of sustainable growth means investing in urban infrastructure – the conclusion is inescapable.

Urban governments need to do their part. This involves continuing to develop and deploy innovative approaches to financing, constructing, and maintaining infrastructure. It means partnering with the private sector when it makes sense, and it means making difficult decisions in balancing competing priorities. Fortunately for Saskatchewan, these are things that urban leaders are experienced at doing.

Long-term solutions to our infrastructure dilemma require provincial leadership. Specifically, there are three things the next provincial government must do if it is to secure our province's long-term growth: actively lobby the federal government for a long-term urban infrastructure investment plan; continue to move aggressively towards the creation and funding of a long-term provincial plan for urban infrastructure; and provide immediate funding to urban governments in the interim.

There is no question that federal investment in Saskatchewan's urban centres is needed to secure our infrastructure for the future. Saskatchewan's provincial government must work with SUMA, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, our private sector partners, and other provinces and territories to make sure that federal investment is realized. Our next government must add its voice to those calling publicly for a renewed federal interest in this area.

A similar provincial initiative must also exist. Fortunately the province and SUMA are already in progress on the

work necessary to develop such a program. When that work is done, the provincial government must have the political will and the fiscal discipline to implement it.

Implementation of a provincial plan is at least a full year away, and a federal plan is likely at minimum two full years away. In the meantime, urban infrastructure continues to crumble, growth continues to demand new infrastructure, and costs continue to increase. Without an interim provincial investment now, our economic and population growth will be jeopardized and our future cost for addressing the problem will increase.

With an annual need exceeding \$400 million, there is a lot of room for provincial investment. Urban governments are looking for an interim funding arrangement similar in structure to the Municipal Economic Enhancement Program.

SUMA will look for the next provincial government to:

1. Partner with SUMA and the private sector to lobby the federal government for a long-term urban infrastructure funding stream;
2. Implement a provincial long-term urban infrastructure funding stream; and
3. Invest considerably in urban infrastructure until the long-term streams are active.

- 1 Derived by projecting potential revenue had the current funding model been in place.
- 2 The \$3 Billion estimate is consistent with FCM's national estimate of \$123 Billion, and consistent with preliminary estimates from Regina and Saskatoon.
- 3 OECD Policy Brief.
- 4 <http://www.enterprisesaskatchewan.ca/economicoverview>
- 5 Statistics Canada, Canadian Economic Observer, September 2007.
- 6 According to Ministry of Health.
- 7 <https://secure.globeadvisor.com/romf.html> (last accessed: October 11, 2011)
- 8 Informetrica Limited, Municipal Infrastructure: Macroeconomic Impacts of Spending and Level-of-Government Financing, May 2008, A report for FCM.

Welcome to Braun Agro, SUMAdvantage's newest partner!

Braun Agro is a Saskatchewan based business in Swift Current that has been operating for over 20 years, built on a belief in personalized service, competitiveness and efficiency. Braun Agro offers a wide variety of pest management products.

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- Insecticides: aerosols, dusts and specialty products, monitors and traps
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- Mosquito abatement

Member Benefits

- SUMA members will receive preferred pricing.
- Shipping or delivery of in-stock products within 2-3 business days with all attempts being made to minimize shipping costs for the customer. For those products not in-stock, shipping will be free for orders of \$3000 or over to any location from the Brantford warehouse and will arrive within 10 days.
- Face-to-face time with Braun Agro representative as they prefer to deliver products directly to the customer themselves when possible.
- Authorized dealer of the largest enclosed trailer dealer in the United States; Wells Cargo.
- Authorized dealer of the leading supplier for pest management; Agrium Advanced Technologies.

How the program works

Members contact Braun Agro direct at (306) 773-9006 or braunagro@gmail.com to place an order or for product inquiries, noting that they are a SUMA member. Braun Agro will provide you with product and pricing information and the

price quoted from Braun Agro is the price you will be invoiced for by SUMA.

Visit the www.suma.org, under SUMAdvantage to learn more about this program and other partner programs.



CRIMESTOPPERS:

Assistance is requested in solving the following crimes. If you have any information about any of these incidents, please call Crimestoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

Assiniboia

Sometime between August 1 and August 9, 2011, unknown culprit(s) stole a number of traffic control signs, in various locations, within the town limits of Assiniboia, SK.

Midale

Sometime between August 1 and August 9, 2011, unknown culprit(s) stole a number of traffic control signs, in various locations, within the town limits of Midale, SK.

Naicam

On July 25, 2011 at 12:26 p.m. Melfort RCMP were called about a quantity of money that was taken from the Pharmasave in Naicam, SK. If anyone in the vicinity of the Pharmasave saw anyone that seemed suspicious, they are asked to please call the Melfort RCMP or Crime stoppers.

Why do the work yourself when the *SUMAdvantage* does the work for you?

Take “advantage” of SUMAdvantage! SUMAdvantage always has your municipality’s best interest in mind. Here are the benefits on which you could be missing out:

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- SUMAdvantage leverages the collective purchasing power of our 450 member municipalities and passes the savings on to our members. Collectively as a SUMA membership we harness the purchasing power of over 2 billion dollars. This purchasing power allows us to negotiate discounted pricing on products and services.
- When choosing suppliers, SUMAdvantage listens to our members and considers every piece of feedback to see what our members need. SUMAdvantage thoroughly researches and pre-screens all strategic partners so you don’t have to. Save yourself money and time -- we have done the work for you!
- Program partners are selected based on the needs of our members. Our partners have strong reputations and a history of delivering quality and well-priced products to their customers.
- The SUMAdvantage programs also helps generate revenue to advance the lobbying efforts of the association, which in turn keeps membership fees down.

What do our members have to say about SUMAdvantage?

- **“The Village of Vibank has been involved in the SUMAdvantage program since its inception. In times of being fiscally responsible to our taxpayers any money that can be saved is a bonus to our Village. We would recommend the SUMAdvantage program to all municipalities.”**

*Jeanette Schaeffer,
Administrator, Village of Vibank*

- **“I found the order process through SUMA to be very easy, and it was a great benefit to have the SUMA staff able to answer any questions that I had.”**

*Nicole Monchamp,
Administrator, Village of Buchanan*

- **“We will continue to take “advantage” of the SUMAdvantage Program as the benefits of the program and the ease of using the program is definitely worthwhile. Thank you SUMAdvantage!”**

*Amanda Kaufmann,
Residential Building Official, City of Weyburn*

SUMA is very proud to be able to offer services and programs that help our members in their day to day operations through the SUMAdvantage program. We are committed to continuous improvement in the effectiveness and quality of these services, and are always working on new offerings to add to the value of your membership.

We welcome your thoughts, ideas, and suggestions! If there are products and services that we currently are not providing but you feel would benefit our members we would like to hear about it in detail.

SUMAdvantage should be your first call for savings! Contact Tania Meier, Event & Corporate Services Manager, (306) 525-4379, or tmeier@suma.org.



CRIMESTOPPERS:

Assistance is requested in solving the following crimes. If you have any information about any of these incidents, please call Crimestoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

Melville area

The Melville RCMP are requesting the public's assistance locating the person(s) responsible for numerous property damage related offences down in the Crooked Lake area. Sometime between August 28 and September 2nd, 2011 two cabins located at Criddle Avenue were broken into.

Long-Term Sustainable Municipal Planning Part II: Bridging Assets & Opportunities

By Tayah Hanson, Project Facilitator, MCDP

This article is a continuation of a series that began in the previous issue of the Urban Voice, outlining the steps towards long-term sustainability planning. Whereas the first article outlined the process and purpose of community visioning, this article will discuss the importance of identifying resources, assets, and opportunities to start a strategic plan.

Long-term planning is a lot like embarking on a road trip. Imagine your vision as the horizon. It is a destination that you might never reach but will always strive for. In order to reach your grand destination, more preparation is necessary. Your mission provides your mode of transport and means of travelling. It defines how you will reach your destination. Your values describe the quality and characteristics of your journey that align with your vision or the important “playground rules” as you go. To achieve the vision and pursue the mission, we must adhere to a code of conduct or principles to guide our decisions along the way.

“Intangible assets are the dynamic, living attributes unique to your community.”

Now that you have decided where you are going and how you will get there, it is time to pack. What do you need to fill your suitcase? What do you have on hand? What do you need to acquire? It is time to take stock.

Identifying Local Tangible and Intangible Assets

Establishing a long-term sustainable plan involves identifying the existing assets and positive qualities of your community. These can be categorized into tangible assets (physical infrastructure, geography, local institutions, economy, and industry) and intangible assets (dynamic, living attributes unique to your community). A comprehensive needs assessment survey can provide you a list of your tangible assets. Your municipal PSAB Tangible Capital Asset Report



is also an excellent resource. It is the experience of your community that identifies the intangibles; for example, friendly neighborhoods, community spirit, cultural expression, and sense of safety and well-being. Start by brainstorming a list of the things you like about your community. Why do you live there? Why do you stay? What would you miss if you left? Survey your local residents. Ask visitors what they think. Once the discussion starts rolling, you may recognize attributes you had not seen before. You may find that a good brainstorming session leads to greater energy and enthusiasm which can help your municipality gain momentum and establishes strong players.

"A challenge is simply an opportunity standing on its head."

Identifying Regional Assets & Opportunities

An intermunicipal group can start with each community contributing a list of assets and attributes and then pooling the information to create a group profile. MCDP offers

a comprehensive needs assessment survey as well as an intermunicipal co-operation gauging survey to assist communities in recognizing community attributes and ways to work together.

In highlighting community assets and attributes, communities are better able to identify gaps and deficiencies in resources, infrastructure, services, and other challenges to address in long-term planning. A challenge is simply an opportunity standing on its head. Some are obvious and others hidden. An excellent resource to help you identify your problem areas is the Municipal Government Sustainability Self-Assessment Tool (<http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/Administration/Assessment/MGSST>). Put your heads together and connect the dots: What municipal and local resources do you have amongst the group? What similar issues do you have? Pooling your ideas and resources will help you get on the road faster and take you further towards the horizon.

Next in the series, we will explore how to take those challenges and implement a strategy to fill in the gaps. For more information about the Municipal Capacity Development Program, visit www.municipalcapacity.ca.

Group Exercise

Break into pairs or small groups of three or four. Have each group list their top four concerns and rate them by priority. Next, bring the whole group back together and compare notes. What issues stand out? How do the priorities match up? What connections can you see between the issues or between communities? As a group, develop a master list of all concerns, and identify your top four. Keep a record of everyone's concerns to come back to at a later date. Your top four issues/priorities set the foundation of your group's goals, objectives, and actions.

The focus of this conference is to highlight the benefits of partnerships of different communities across the province including the Municipal, Industrial, Political, & Aboriginal Communities. We are showcasing the benefits of working together to grow Saskatchewan and the positive relationships that can be formed as a result.




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