

VOLUME 17 NUMBER 3 | FALL 2012

URBAN*Voice*

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SASKATCHEWAN URBAN MUNICIPALITIES ASSOCIATION



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URBAN Voice

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SASKATCHEWAN URBAN MUNICIPALITIES ASSOCIATION

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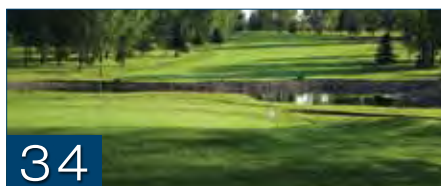
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PROVINCE STEPS UP WITH MOG

Allan Earle, President

Urban governments work with partners every day, and one of our strongest and most important partners is the provincial government. The introduction of the Municipal Operating Grant (MOG) showed what can happen through leadership and collaboration – one of the strongest revenue sharing programs in the country. The MOG gives urban governments stable, reliable funding for some of our operational costs. This allows us to provide critical services used by everyone, everyday – things like water, police, fire protection, recreation facilities and parks.

To express our thanks to the provincial government, Saskatchewan cities have taken to the airwaves and local newspapers to tell the public and the government that we

*"Thank you to the province
for working with us to provide
the funding to keep our
communities safe and vibrant;
we look forward to working
with you to make sure they
stay that way."*

appreciate the MOG. It gives us sustainable and predictable funding. Less time spent worrying about and arranging funding allows urban governments to concentrate on good governance and taking leadership roles in, and for, our communities.

Investing in urban areas benefits the whole province. It supports the growth that keeps the economic wheels of Saskatchewan turning and makes our province attractive to people and business. Attracting and retaining people means making our province – and our urban centers, the engines of growth – attractive places. To do that, we need competitive services and an enviable quality of life.

Saskatchewan villages, towns and cities have to lead the way in building on the growth in Saskatchewan. Partnering with the province to receive a portion of the PST helped bring us to here; we need to build on that partnership to maintain the momentum of growth. We build partnerships with other governments, and with each other through SUMA, so we can continue to make Saskatchewan a place where people want to live, work, play and grow. This takes recreation facilities, vibrant, safe communities, clean drinking water and efficient modes of transportation.

Thank you to the province for working with us to provide the funding to keep our communities safe and vibrant; we look forward to working with you to make sure they stay that way. Thank you for being our partners, and building the Saskatchewan of today and tomorrow. ■

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MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS ARE ABOUT MORE THAN INDIVIDUALS

Laurent Mougeot, Chief Executive Officer

As Saskatchewan grows economically, and in population, councils need to make strategic decisions about the level of services to offer, the quality of life in their community, and how to sustainably finance its operations. In other words, council needs to determine a viable, attainable vision for the community.

Voters are looking for individuals with the ability to communicate the vision they hold for their community and the pathway to get there. When it comes down to it, the upcoming municipal elections are about

selecting the most competent leaders. Communities need their council to see the key issues in the area, find solutions to problems, and take action.

Names on the ballot this fall will include influential politicians, dedicated volunteers, energetic candidates, proven incumbents, well-intentioned individuals, and newcomers to the scene of municipal politics. Citizens will cast their votes based on what they know about the individual candidates (personality, experience, vision), what they expect from

their elected officials, and how those two factors mesh.

All voters want elected officials who are accountable to the citizens, but municipal elections are about more than individuals. They are also about putting together a team that will define your city, town or village beyond their four-year term. Elected officials will need to, as a team, take the time to express their common values, principles and drive to work for the best interests of their community. They need to find their community vision, and lead their community there. ■

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LEADERSHIP & GOOD GOVERNANCE

CLIFF WRIGHT – 22 YEARS ON COUNCIL



(photo courtesy Local History Room)

Born and raised in Saskatoon, **Cliff Wright** was the city's first homegrown mayor. It is hard to question his dedication to his city after he spent 20 years volunteering,

10 years as an alderman, and 12 years as Mayor. When he retired in 1988 after four successive terms, Wright was Saskatoon's longest-serving mayor. He served a total of 22 years on Saskatoon City Council.

Saskatoon City Councillor **Pat Lorje**, who served on council alongside Mayor Wright for nine years, described him as an "excellent mayor" and said his leadership style was "very firm, but collegial. He clearly was a leader, but he was also very inclusive."

It was this leadership that played a vital role in two of Wright's greatest achievements as Mayor: the building of Circle Drive Bridge and the construction of Saskatchewan Place – now known as the Credit Union Centre. Wright, Lorje pointed out, "did so many things that have allowed Saskatoon to pull ahead as a major city." Pull ahead it did; in 2011 Saskatoon was Canada's fastest-growing city. Without leaders like Wright emphasizing growth in the 1970s and 1980s, it would have been difficult for the City of Saskatoon to get there.

Wright's list of work for the City of Saskatoon is long and includes extensive work in the recreation sector. Before his election, Wright volunteered with sports and recreation programs for 20 years. During his time in office he attracted major sporting events to Saskatoon, and played a part in the creation of several recreation complexes, including Saskatchewan Place.

This list only briefly touches on the work Wright did while in public office. The list is important, but so is how he accomplished it.

Lorje says everything he accomplished was done as a gentleman. "He had an ability – and still does – of making people feel special." This leadership style allowed Wright to be both successful and respected.

Wright's dedication to the City of Saskatoon has been honoured many times. In 1998 he received an Honorary Doctor of Laws from the University of Saskatchewan. A Saskatoon Public Library was renamed the Cliff Wright Branch Library in 1989. For his "contribution to province and country" Wright was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1989, and the province honoured Wright with its highest honour, the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, in 1999.

Cliff Wright demonstrated effective and impactful leadership at the municipal level of government, leaving a legacy for the City of Saskatoon.

WHERE ARE THE WOMEN IN URBAN GOVERNMENT?

Despite accounting for more than half of Canada's population, women make up a mere 21.9 per cent of local elected officials. The numbers are particularly weak in Saskatchewan. In 2006, the province had 745 male mayors, but only 65 female mayors.

The United Nations has determined 30 per cent is the "minimal percentage of women required for government to reflect women's concerns." Saskatchewan and Canada are both clearly lagging behind this threshold. Why are we lagging?

Women interviewed for a research project carried out by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) cited several reasons for their lack of involvement in municipal politics. These include family responsibilities, lack of inclusive policies, inadequate information on how to get involved, and even discrimination. This shows that while women have made progress, there are still certain obstacles

that women face when they want to participate in politics. So what can we do?

FCM wants to combat this issue and launched a campaign to get female representation in municipal government to 30 per cent by 2026. Part of that campaign is the Protégé Program. FCM President and Edmonton City Councillor **Karen Leibovici** said it is "important to have a diversity of voices around the council table."

The FCM campaign includes municipal campaign workshops and mentoring opportunities for Canadian women, especially those in remote areas. Based on a similar program in Toronto, FCM's Protégé Program aims to engage young women in local politics. The program seeks to teach women across the country about media skills, the decision-making process of a council, and includes shadowing a councillor. Almost 40 per cent of campaign workshop participants have been elected

to civic office and a number of women have been through the Protégé Program.

Leibovici says some women coming out of the program are interested in running for office in the future, while others would like to work in the background. Regardless, she says, it "provided everybody the ability to decide if they want to be involved in politics." The program is about opportunity and engagement and participation is just the first step.

These types of programs can help us to improve our province and country. Canada prides itself on being a diverse nation, but this is not reflected in government. Given our particularly low numbers, Saskatchewan has work to do. Improvement is possible, and existing programs are already having meaningful impact. Making gender diversity a priority in municipal politics is an important step in achieving a truly diverse – and accurate – representation of the people of Saskatchewan. ■



Advocacy UPDATE

This column is an opportunity for SUMA's Policy and Communication Services (PCS) staff to update members on the work we do on your behalf. In this edition, we introduce you to our staff, tell you about the principles guiding our work, and give updates on a few policy items. As always, if you have questions about anything in this column, or other policy issues, please contact PCS staff. We are here for you.

WHO WE ARE

The PCS department is led by its Director, **Mark Cooper**. Mark joined SUMA in August 2009, coming from the Ministry of Government Relations. Before that he worked for Alberta Municipal Affairs. Mark recently completed his Masters of Business Administration degree from Royal Roads University. Mark is also responsible for the housing policy file.

Sean McEachern is SUMA's Senior Policy Advisor, and has been with the association since 2006. Before that, Sean spent three years as Special

Assistant to the former federal Minister of Finance, the Hon. Ralph Goodale. Sean holds a Bachelor of Education degree from the University of Regina. Sean's responsibilities at SUMA include matters related to public safety and health, and intergovernmental affairs.

Che-Wei Chung joined the SUMA team in 2009 as a Policy Advisor. He is responsible for policy files on transportation, immigration, community development and environmental policy (and other duties as necessary like managing the Municipal Recycling Bridge Funding Program, IT support, official event photographer and unofficial heavy box mover). Che-Wei graduated from the University of Lethbridge, with a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. He is currently working toward his Masters in Public Administration through the University of Regina.

SUMA's Communications and Web Coordinator, **Tiffany Wolf** is a communicator, born and raised in Saskatchewan. She got her journalism degree from the University of Regina in 2005, and soon found her way into communications. She spent six years

writing about pensions and benefits with the provincial government before coming to SUMA this spring. She has a nearly obsessive love for words, learning how to use them best, and helping others get the message to their audience.

THE PRINCIPLES GUIDING OUR WORK

The primary goal of the PCS department's work, as outlined by the SUMA Board of Directors, is to position SUMA as the leading voice on urban issues in Saskatchewan. We want provincial decision-makers to always consider what urban governments – our cities, towns, and villages – will have to say about the policy options being considered. We are guided by our driving force: to promote, protect and defend the interests of our members.

SUMA's membership is 450 governments strong. Our members represent 82 per cent of the municipal population in Saskatchewan. They directly inject more than \$2 billion into the provincial economy every year, and they manage more than half the public infrastructure in Saskatchewan. There are SUMA members in every

The primary goal of the PCS department's work is to position SUMA as the leading voice on urban issues in Saskatchewan.



provincial constituency and federal riding in the province, and our members' locally elected councils have significant influence in their communities. Given all this, it is reasonable that SUMA should be the leading voice on the issues that matter to our members. Our members – and the citizens they serve – deserve nothing less.

Promoting, protecting and defending the interests of our members means keeping current on our members' priorities. We do this through facilitating discussions, assisting at meetings of the Saskatchewan City Mayors' Caucus, attending meetings of Northern Mayors, meeting with associations like UMAAS, and talking with our members. Through this work, PCS and the SUMA Board have identified three core interests of our members:

1. **Funding** – Our goal is to ensure urban governments have a sufficient, sustainable and predictable level of operational and capital funding support from the provincial and federal government.
2. **Autonomy** – Our goal is to develop a provincial legislative, regulatory and funding environment that maximizes local autonomy. This is driven by the principle that locally elected councils are in the best position to make decisions.
3. **Capacity** – Our work assumes that we operate in a government-to-government relationship with the province. This means that SUMA members must operate responsibly and fulfill their obligations as

We are guided by our driving force: to promote, protect and defend the interests of our members.

outlined in provincial and federal legislation and regulations. The PCS department focuses on ensuring that members have a sufficient, sustainable level of local and/or regional capacity.

We will make SUMA a leader on urban issues by focusing on our members and their interests. This strategic focus provides the starting point for the work we do. Our work happens within the structure of our principles:

1. **Elected officials determine our direction** – While SUMA has a strong, effective, and capable PCS staff, our elected Board of Directors determine our organization's direction. When SUMA meets with Ministers, Board members lead the meeting, with PCS staff there to support their work.
2. **Driven by interests of our members** – Keeping the focus on our members is so important, it's our driving force and one of our principles.
3. **Relationship-based work** – The work with the provincial and federal governments and other partners is based on building relationships. We approach our work with a long-

term, pragmatic, and principled approach. We are honest, and look for opportunities to work with others, while serving our members' best interests.

4. Solid research informs our work

– The Board wants SUMA to be known as a fact-based public policy organization. We use evidence and research to make our points. In everything we do, we make sure the facts are on our side.

5. **Thorough analysis** – SUMA prides itself on an approach to work that looks at issues from all perspectives.

THE THINGS WE DO

The work of the PCS department has four primary components:

1. **Research – Turning problems into solutions.** When SUMA members identify their challenges, concerns, or priorities, PCS staff members work to understand those issues and find options to address them.
2. **Policy Development – Turning solutions into actions.** This is a core-strength of the PCS department. We align our research and analysis to the interests of our members. Our policy development work produces actionable recommendations.

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SUMA's membership is 450 governments strong.

3. Advocacy – Turning actions into results. SUMA staff and the Board actively engage with provincial decision-makers on a regular basis. We engage with the federal government when the opportunity comes up. We also develop collaborative agendas with other associations, partnering groups and agencies. Our advocacy objective is to advance the solutions and actions that best meet the need of our members. Our focus is on delivering meaningful results.

4. Communication – Telling the story of turning problems into

results. Keeping members informed is essential. Most of our communication is electronic. We have our website (www.suma.org), our bi-weekly e-newsletter (Urban Update), our subject-based email lists, and our quarterly magazine (Urban Voice). And we're always looking for new ways to connect with members.

HOW OUR WORK IS ORGANIZED

The PCS department takes policy direction from the Board. To facilitate this work, the Board has established four policy committees: Intergovernmental Affairs; Public

Safety and Health; Environment; and Community and Economic Development. Almost every policy item flows through one of these committees.

A policy advisor is assigned to each committee, the portfolio for every provincial ministry is assigned to one, and a Board member is appointed to 'shadow' each ministry. This keeps SUMA staff and Board members aware of what is going on in ministries. This gives SUMA a strategic advantage when responding to shifts in provincial direction.

More information, including the mandate and membership for each policy committee, the assignment of staff, and the shadow responsibilities of Board members is available on the SUMA website under the Advocacy drop-down menu.

Issues we're working on now

Municipal Operating Grant (MOG)

The province uses the MOG to transfer one full point of PST revenue to local governments. This unconditional sharing of provincial revenue has been a necessary and welcome addition to the funding basket for SUMA's members. MOG funding for next year will increase by 11.4 per cent, bringing the total amount to \$264,432,200.

This year, the program is going through a review, with a focus on distributing funding. The current distribution is: cities - 46 per cent; rural municipalities - 29 per cent; towns, villages and resort villages - 18 per cent; and northern municipalities - 7 per cent.

SUMA is working with the provincial government and SARM to examine the underlying principles behind this distribution formula, look at new data, and consider how this distribution might be changed. We expect the provincial government will announce the new distribution formula before the end of September. This should give local governments plenty of time to calculate their MOG allocations for next year's budget.

Infrastructure

While the MOG funding has alleviated many operational pressures for local governments, growing communities still face severe limitations meeting the need for new infrastructure while sustaining current supply. SUMA is working with the provincial government and others toward a long-term infrastructure program. This program would provide predictable and sustainable provincial funding for the capital needs of local governments.

The work to develop the model for the provincial program should be complete in late November. This will inform submissions to the provincial government to seek infrastructure funding in the 2013-14 provincial budget. The launch and funding of this new program is necessary to complete the cycle of provincial investment in urban governments.

At the same time, work continues to develop a long-term federal infrastructure program. This program could be launched as early as 2014-15.

Environment

The environmental file is one of SUMA's busiest policy files. With a portfolio

including water, wastewater, solid waste management, and climate change, the impact of this file on SUMA members is significant. Right now, we are working to protect our members' interests on the province's proposed Multi-Material Recycling Program (MMRP), and the proclamation of the Saskatchewan Environmental Code (Code).

SUMA has been advocating for a provincial MMRP for nearly a decade. This program would shift the burden of paying for the cost of recycling to the producers of recyclable waste. The province's proposed solution would hold producers responsible for 75 per cent of the cost of recycling – all of which will be passed on to consumers – while municipal governments would still be responsible for at least 25 per cent of the cost. While SUMA would prefer a model that sees producers pay the entire cost of recycling waste they create, the proposed approach is viable, if the correct governance structure is in place. Unfortunately, the government proposes an MMRP governance board consisting entirely of industry representatives. With industry being in a clear conflict

of interest, a Board without a counter-balancing perspective will be unable to operate in the best interests of Saskatchewan people. This is worsened by the reality that almost all current industry representatives come from outside our province. SUMA's argument is clear, simple, and uncontestable – as long as local governments must pay to clean up the waste of industry, then local governments must have a say in the governance of the MMRP. Today, for some reason, the province is unwilling to make this commitment. SUMA encourages its members to meet with MLAs and emphasize this message.

The province is currently preparing to proclaim the first few chapters of the Code. It brings environmental regulations under one structure and for the most part, simply articulates existing standards. Where standards will change, the government offers a multi-year phase-in period to adjust to the new rules. One feature of particular value to municipal governments is the ability to propose different ways of meeting the regulatory standards. The Code sets the environmental standards, but leaves the option for how to meet those standards up to those that must comply. SUMA has worked hard to ensure that the provisions of the Code are mostly favourable to our members and provide as much flexibility and time to adapt as possible. Meanwhile, we are working to ensure the Ministry of Environment has support mechanisms in place to help members with the transition. If you've got questions about the Code and its potential impact on your urban government, contact Che-Wei Chung at the SUMA office.

Lobbying Registry

The Government of Saskatchewan is considering a registry for all individuals and organizations that lobby the government. Several other provinces in Canada have adopted similar registries. A registry is meant to increase transparency, accountability and good governance.

When the registry was first proposed, it was possible that all urban governments that interacted with MLAs or ministry staff might need to register. SUMA took the position in early public consultations that urban governments and their representatives should be exempt by virtue of being governments.

The provincial officials agreed and provided an exemption to all municipal governments. However, their report suggested SUMA would still have to register.

Our survey of other jurisdictions in Canada shows that none of them require municipal associations to register. As we operate in a non-profit, public sector, and representative role, SUMA should be exempt from registration. SUMA continues to make this case to the government. Given that SUMA is empowered to advocate on behalf of

our members by an Act of the provincial legislature, an exemption makes sense.

Other Issues

The issues noted above are a small sample of the things the PCS department is working. If you would like more information about these or other issues, visit www.suma.org under the Advocacy drop-down menu. If you don't see what you're looking for on the site, contact any member of the PCS department directly and we'd be happy to help you out. ■

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Leading the way at the 2012 Saskatchewan Municipal Awards

Making our communities better, stronger and more vibrant means someone has to step up, take notice and make changes. The Saskatchewan Municipal Awards (SMAs) were a chance to celebrate that leadership with communities from across the province.

On May 11 in Regina, the SMAs

recognized communities in six categories, plus a special Judges' Award. Having these categories means a variety of projects qualify for nomination, but are specific enough that the award means something, says SMA Program Coordinator **Marlys Wasylyniuk**. "I think it's amazing," she says of the program. "I think it goes to show that

no matter the size of your municipality, if you put the hands of everyone together you can accomplish a lot."

The communities celebrated at the SMAs this year put their hands and their heads together. They came up with ways to improve their communities, and led the way for others to think about challenges in new ways.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD

Unity Waste Water Diversion and Reuse Project



The Town of Unity took on the challenge of finding a way to tackle several problems with one solution. The waters in Sink and Gordon Lakes have been rising for decades. The rising water was damaging the town's lagoon system, and the nearby golf course was losing land to flooding. They had studies done, but the solutions that came out of those studies

meant flooding other lands, which everyone agreed was a bad idea.

When the area went through a drought in 2002, the Sifto Salt Mine needed a way to get cooling water for its equipment. A temporary aboveground pipeline was constructed, and an innovative solution was born. The Waste Water Diversion and Reuse Project now

permanently pipes waste water from the town's lagoon and storm sewer systems six kilometers to the Sifto Salt Mine. It diverts 120 million litres of water from the Sink and Gordon Lakes every month, and helps Sifto Salt supply the more than 10,000 litres of water a minute it takes to cool their condensers.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP AWARD ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP AWARD

Maple Creek Heritage District: Main Street Revitalization Program

Agriculture has been the king of industry in Saskatchewan for decades, but its unpredictability makes it a risky venture for entire communities to bank on. The Town of Maple Creek took the lead and recognized the changing economic landscape that is the new Saskatchewan, and looked at what their community had to offer as the province grew. The community saw potential in the tourism industry, as part of Tourism Saskatchewan's tourism destination areas – the Cypress Hills Destination Area.

The town collaborated with non-profit organizations and area business to create the Maple Creek Heritage District and Main Street Revitalization Program. When designated in 2009, it became the second formally designated heritage district in Saskatchewan and the first in a small urban community. The three-year implementation plan for the Main Street Program and development of the Municipal Cultural Plan is expected to wrap up in 2014, but the effects of the initiative are expected to make Maple Creek a sustainable community in the long term.



REGIONAL LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS AWARD

Calling Lakes Planning District Commission

A shining example of leadership and good governance, the Calling Lakes Planning District Commission came together to draft a set of guidelines for development in their area. The RM of North Qu'Appelle invited nearby municipalities and First Nations communities in 2008, and today the group includes the RM of North Qu'Appelle, the Town of Fort Qu'Appelle, The Resort Villages of B-Say-Tah, District of Katepwa and Fort San, the Village of Lebret, and associate member Village of Lipton.

This group took the initiative to decide what they want their area to look like in the future, and how to make that happen in a way that works for everyone. Then they came together to make a plan to ensure their community grows sustainably, safely, and together. They adopted the slogan "4 Lakes, 4 Seasons, 4 Everyone," and today are building a regional plan to live up to that slogan.



MUNICIPAL INNOVATION AND SERVICE EXCELLENCE

The Pasquia Trust.

When the Carrot River Hospital closed in 2000, area residents came together to raise funds to build the Carrot River Health Centre and refurbish the former Hospital into seniors' housing. Watching the community come together, some in the area started floating the idea of supporting the Town of Carrot River and surrounding RM of Moose Range in a new and unique way. They came up with a first-of-its-kind project.

The two councils came together to create The Pasquia Trust, an agency that will issue grants to local projects, groups and organizations. Citizens make donations to the trust, can specify if they want their donations to go to certain projects or into the pool to be used at the board's discretion, and receive receipts for income tax purposes. Since the Trust was created, citizens have donated more than \$60,000 and grant applications are already coming in to create, as the agency calls them, "Local Legacies."



COMMUNITY LIFE ENRICHMENT AWARD JUDGES AWARD

Yorkton's Aviva Project

After a flood in 2010, the City of Yorkton looked at a major revitalization of its downtown. It marked a skateboard and bike park as something it could do in the future, but **Dave Nussbaumer** took the lead to campaign for a \$150,000 prize for community projects called the Aviva Community Fund. The City agreed that if the campaign won, they would match the prize.

Nussbaumer put together a team including many volunteers. Together they promoted the project online, and in their community. They used social media, a television commercial featuring well-known local supporters, and appeared at local events like parades and hockey games. Local businesses supported the advertising campaign, which helped push Yorkton's Aviva Project into the finals, and ultimately, the campaign brought in the \$150,000 prize. Construction on the new skate plaza should be finished this fall.





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Your right to engage in a political activity while maintaining the principle of political impartiality in the public service is recognized in Part 7 of the *Public Service Employment Act*.

If you wish to engage in a political activity at the **municipal, provincial, territorial or federal** level, you should first assess whether it could impair, or be perceived as impairing, your political impartiality. You are encouraged to discuss the political activity in which you wish to engage with your manager, your organization's Designated Political Activities Representative or the Public Service Commission (PSC).

If you wish to seek nomination as, or be, a candidate in a **municipal, provincial, territorial or federal** election, you are required, prior to taking other steps, to obtain permission from the PSC and, if applicable, a leave without pay during the election period.

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- Saskatchewan has experienced unprecedented economic growth, and the value of property in the province has also followed this trend. As a result, the 2013 Revaluation will report significant increases in property assessments. While a revaluation updates property assessments, the overall impact on property tax is designed to be revenue neutral. Municipalities set tax levels according to their budgets needs, and use SAMA's assessments as a way of allocating taxes. As Saskatchewan's property valuation experts, SAMA is working to achieve transparent, understandable and defensible property valuations.
- Preliminary assessment numbers for the 2013 Revaluation were sent to municipalities beginning in July. Please contact SAMA if you would like to discuss these preliminary numbers, or any other questions surrounding the 2013 revaluation.
- SAMA is continually working to improve our customer service. By submitting requests for maintenance on an ongoing basis, our municipal customers can help to improve the overall timeliness of maintenance delivery.
- For more information on SAMA, Saskatchewan's assessment system or to view individual property assessments on SAMAView, please visit our website at www.sama.sk.ca.

Contact SAMA by phone at: 1-800-667-7262,
or by email: info.request@sama.sk.ca

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: communication is key to sustainable change

By Tanya Doucette, Municipal Capacity Development Program

When a municipality starts developing a plan for the future – whether it is risk management, land use, or economic development – they develop a list of the key stakeholders that need to be involved, informed, or consulted. The largest key stakeholder in municipal decisions is the community. It is important to update the community on projects, inform them of changes, and find out how they see the future of their municipality.

Engaging community members can have a number of benefits to a project or change being made:

1. Change is inevitable but many people still try to resist it, especially if the change is out of their control. Asking for opinions and feedback can reduce resistance because community members develop a sense of ownership over the change.
2. Engaging the community may draw out volunteers who can help with a project, alleviating some of pressure on the municipal administration.

3. Gathering information about citizens can provide data to move forward on a project. For example, the number of people who want access to a water system can be useful in a feasibility study or the number of unemployed welders could provide a strategic focus for your economic development plan.

Finding the right ways to communicate with and engage community members can be difficult. Some tips to follow:

- Consider using a variety of media to ensure a wide range of people can be reached; not everyone reads the paper, has email, or checks Facebook daily.
- If it is important to have a high engagement rate, consider providing incentives for responses. For example, offer a discount to an upcoming community supper, or an entry into a draw for a free meal at a local restaurant.
- Make information easily available and keep it up to date, especially on social media and community websites.

- Questionnaires are a great way to gather detailed information from individuals. Having them available at the municipal office, mailing them to each resident and/or hiring a student to go door-to-door are all great ways to reach as many residents as possible.
- Provide a summary of your findings to the community to show you understand and accept their views and comments.

Whatever the project or change, it is important the residents continue to be involved in the future of the community. The citizens are the essence and personality of community; they provide the foundation and reason for building a better community. With their involvement, the municipality is one step closer to being sustainable for years to come.

If you would like more information about community engagement or assistance in developing a Communication Plan, please contact MCDP at info@municipalcapacity.ca. ■

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about the Saskatchewan Environmental Code

Courtesy of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guide is to help you understand the *Saskatchewan Environmental Code*, the first of its kind in Canada. Developed by the Ministry of Environment, the Code is an important part of the province's new results-based model for environmental regulation. The purpose of the Code is to achieve environmental objectives by focusing less on process and rules. Under the Code, provision of notification of how environmental objectives will be achieved will replace permitting. This FAQ has been developed specifically for municipalities and non-government organizations with facilities such as water mains, sewer mains, landfills and transfer stations, or those directly affected by related activities, such as drinking water distribution, wastewater collection, septic waste hauling/disposal, and solid waste management.

Landfills and Transfer Stations

Landfills should be considered long-term repositories of household and commercial wastes whose chemistry changes over time through naturally occurring pro-

cesses. Proper siting, design and operation of the landfill can eliminate spread of disease and potential contamination.

Management of the landfill during its postclosure phase is an important aspect of returning the land to a useable form.

Transfer stations are a critical link in economically and safely accumulating waste prior to shipment to a centralized landfill. To keep costs reasonable for landfill owners, smaller municipalities or those with a low population density may choose to establish transfer stations over other waste management options.

Q. I plan to continue operating my existing landfill/ transfer station. How will the new Code affect me?

- A.** (a) Once the Code is proclaimed your existing permit will automatically be extended until July 1, 2017, unless that permit is otherwise cancelled or amended. As of July 1, 2017, you are required to provide notification to the minister and submit either:
- i. an operating plan and an environ-

mental monitoring plan certified by a qualified person; or

- ii. submit an Environmental Protection Plan (EPP) respecting operation and monitoring certified by a qualified person (QP); and
 - iii. comply with any other applicable Code requirements.
- (b) If you do not hold a valid permit, within 90 days of the Code's proclamation, you are required to:
- i. notify the minister;
 - ii. submit an operating plan and an environmental monitoring plan certified by a QP or an EPP respecting operation and monitoring certified by a QP by July 1, 2013; and
 - iii. comply with any other applicable Code requirements.

Q. I want to close my landfill/ transfer station. Will the new Code still apply to me?

- A.** The existing regulations contain requirements for closure, post-closure care, monitoring and reporting, which will be similar in the new Code.



The only difference is that the current guidelines affecting closure are laid out as acceptable specifications in the Code.

Q. I want to dispose of my solid waste on my own property. Do I still have to follow the new Code?

A. The new Code does not apply to waste generated on a property and disposed of on that same property where you generate the waste generator and legally own the land. Disposing of waste received from others or waste generated off-site is contrary to the Code and *The Environmental Management and Protection Act, 2010*. To do so, you must notify the minister and establish a landfill in accordance with the Code.

Q. Can I burn my waste under the new Code?

A. Controlled burning of specific waste types at a landfill – such as trees, bush and clean, untreated lumber – is allowed subject to certain terms and conditions found in the Code as an “Acceptable Solution.” However, an “Alternative Solution” can be submitted to the ministry for review and approval where you intend to burn waste using various thermal technologies with emission controls.

Q. Does an Operator need to hold a valid certification to operate a facility?

A. A landfill or transfer station does not need to have a certified operator. However, the operator should possess adequate training and the municipality should have appropriate training plans incorporated in their operation plan.

Q. We are a Regional Waste Authority (RWA). Are we required to provide Financial Assurance?

A. Because existing RWAs are incorporated, strictly speaking they are required to provide a Financial Assurance. However, since municipalities are the owners/shareholders of the RWA, it

may be exempted from the full weight of the Financial Assurance requirements. You must still demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the minister, that contractual documents exist stating that all the RWA’s member municipalities are jointly responsible for any future liabilities.

Liquid Domestic Waste Hauling

When liquid domestic waste is discharged in a manner where it can impact surface water or shallow groundwater, it represents a hazard to human health and environmental quality. Proper management and disposal of sewage waste helps protect our ecosystem and the health of the population.

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Q. I currently have a Permit to Transport and Dispose of Liquid Domestic Sewage. Will it still be in effect with the new Code?

A. Your existing permit remains in force until December 31, 2012, unless suspended or otherwise cancelled. On or before January 1, 2013, waste haulers will need to register with the ministry using the notification form to continue hauling and disposing of liquid domestic waste.

Q. Will land spreading be banned?

A. No. For the first five years following implementation of the Code, land spreading will be allowed as an "Acceptable Solution" subject to the terms laid out in the Code. After five years, if the septic hauler wishes to continue land spreading septic waste, the hauler must submit an EPP that meets the results-based objectives of public safety and environmental health.

Q. I want to dispose of my own liquid waste on my own property. Does the Code apply to me?

A. Disposal of liquid domestic waste generated by a person's own single family or household onto property owned by that person is exempt from the Code.

Water and Sewer Mains

The new Sewage Main and Water Main Chapters of the Code will apply to municipal waterworks and wastewater works that serve a population of 5,000 or more. Owners will no longer be required to obtain a "Permit to Construct" for water mains or sewer mains, but will be required to provide the ministry with notification.

Q. How long will it take to receive notification acknowledgement after submission?

A. Under the Code, indicating a project will follow the "Acceptable Solution" will result in a near-instant notification that construction can start. Indicating a project will follow the "Alternative Solution" will typically take longer, as the ministry will need to review the submission.

Q. What is the purpose of notifying the Environmental Project Officer (EPO) before construction?

A. It allows the ministry to inspect the works during construction, provide an opportunity for audit activities and promote safety. The EPO may have information about advisories or orders impacting safety. If there is a public safety concern, the EPO may place an advisory or order on the community. ■



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The Black Gold Rush program offered by the Saskatchewan Scrap Tire Corporation (SSTC) in Saskatchewan is aimed at cleaning up all scrap tires on private property and farmland. This gives land owners the opportunity to have scrap tires cleaned up at no cost.

The Black Gold Rush program is a one-time free service provided by SSTC. Once the tire collection has been completed within a designated municipality, the SSTC will not conduct any further tire collections in the area – you don't want to miss this clean up!

The clean up moves from municipality to municipality over an intended 3 year period. Municipalities and service groups play key roles in this project. When it's time for the clean up in your area, working together they will be responsible for communicating

collection information, knowing tire locations and updating the public on the collection process.

The Black Gold Rush is the third and final phase of the SSTC's stewardship program that deals with orphan tires. Phase 1 keeps scrap tires out of the waste stream as they are generated. When retailers install new tires on consumers' vehicles, the used tires removed from the vehicles are kept on-site by the retailers, picked up by collectors and transported directly to processing facilities for recycling. Phase 2 saw the clean-up and recycling of tire stockpiles built up in over 300 town, village and rural municipal landfills throughout Saskatchewan.

For more information on the SSTC's Black Gold Rush program, visit scraptire.sk.ca/black-gold-rush.



Reusing Germany's approach to recycling

By Elliott Bourgeault, 2012 Saskatchewan Legislative Intern

In June, I went to Berlin, Germany for a comparative study tour. Among the sights and sounds vying for my attention in the historic metropolis of 3.5 million people, I couldn't help but notice the garbage – or rather, the lack thereof.

Nearly half of all household waste created in Germany in 2010 was recycled. The remainder is burned for energy or composted. The need to store waste in landfills in Germany has almost been eliminated. At the household level, German citizens must sort waste into one of six separate bins (paper, packaging, glass, etc.), and properly dispose of it. Private industry and the commercial sector are responsible for the products they produce. The recovery of waste is based on a producer-pays model, in which those responsible for originally creating waste must also bear the costs of waste management.

Originally discussed in Sweden, Germany implemented this model in 1991 and it is now firmly entrenched in the country.

By forcing the generators of waste to pay fees for the amount and types of waste they produce, producers have a financial incentive to reduce waste. This is in line with the German government's strategy on waste management, which prioritizes waste avoidance first, followed by recycling, and lastly an environmentally benign method of storing non-recyclable waste. Essentially it is the old 'reduce, reuse, recycle' mantra, which is simple but effective when backed by enough momentum.

The producer-pays model is part of a waste management concept called Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). Through the EPR model, manufacturers and importers bear the responsibility, both financially and physically, for environmental

impacts throughout the entire lifecycle of their products. This model shifts financial responsibility away from municipalities and toward to the producer (and ultimately the consumer through higher prices). Ideally, the EPR model creates a minimization of municipal waste, and eases the responsibility for waste collection and management from municipalities and the taxpayer. Rather, the private sector would have financial (and perhaps physical) responsibility for its products, even at the post-consumer phase.

So how does Canada stack up? In 2006 Canada lagged behind all other G8 and OECD countries on diversion of waste from landfills and incineration, with a 22 per cent diversion rate. The Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment (CCME) approved a Canada-Wide Action Plan for Extended Producer Responsibility in 2009. Member jurisdictions of the

CCME committed to the development and implementation of EPR programs.

From the available data in 2006, Saskatchewan came in dead last in Canada with an 11 per cent diversion rate. At the moment there are 12 EPR programs in operation in Saskatchewan, but only five require mandatory participation by industry.

Where household recycling programs exist, they are typically publicly funded rather than funded by the specific producers and consumers. For example, the towns of Rosthern and Dalmeny have curbside recycling programs, but they are user-pay systems. Regina and Saskatoon are preparing for resident-funded curbside recycling programs that would require every homeowner to pay for recycling. However, Saskatchewan still lags far behind the rest of the country on this front as Regina and Saskatoon are the last major Canadian cities to implement a curbside-recycling program.

So why does Saskatchewan perform so poorly on the recycling front? Is it simply not profitable enough?

The German case would indicate that recycling can be not only economically feasible, but beneficial. In 2010 the waste industry in Germany employed 200,000 people and generated more than 40 billion Euros (almost \$50 billion Canadian). **Jochen Flasbarth**, President of the German Federal Environment Agency, says, "Environmental protection [including recycling] in Germany is a huge success story for the economy. Without environmental protection as an economic driving force, Germany would have been much worse off throughout the [recent economic] crisis."

The CCME estimates that if the status quo in Canada is maintained, from 2008 to 2033, some \$25 billion of recyclable materials will be wasted, while an attainable increase in Canadian recycling rates could inject \$10 billion directly into the economy. There is plenty of opportunity for Saskatchewan to take advantage of the potential in developing a better recycling industry in the province.

Ideally, a more-developed recycling industry in the province would follow the German model, undertaken by private industry. One reason is that state-financed waste management programs typically gain ground far slower than privately run programs, largely because funds are often diverted to areas other than waste management. Private programs would be funded by the inputs

from EPR programs and the profits from the sale of secondary raw materials gained through the recycling process.

While tax dollars may find their way into the initial creation of a more-developed recycling industry, Saskatchewan's current economic prosperity sets the perfect stage for the growth of what will be an increasingly important industry. Based on the estimates by the CCME and the German experience, it seems that a strong recycling industry is not just feasible, but profitable. This is not to mention the more intangible and potentially larger economic benefits of environmental sustainability and protection stemming from diverting waste from landfills.

If a more-developed recycling industry would be economically and environmentally beneficial for the province, why has there not been more action? Is it simply the absence of a recycling-oriented mindset from Saskatchewan residents?

Part of the success of recycling in Germany is due to the pro-recycling mindset held by the public and industry. While this type of thinking is not present to the same extent in Saskatchewan, this does not seem to be the most influential

factor in recycling rates. Interestingly, neither income nor education has much effect on recycling behavior; access to recycling has a larger effect. With more access to convenient and effective recycling programs, it is possible that Saskatchewan residents could become staunch supporters of an environmentally conscientious and recycling-oriented society.

While it is not realistic to expect that Saskatchewan match Germany's recycling rates anytime soon, there is room for progress. With commitment from both federal and provincial governments on the EPR front, and efforts from municipal governments to work with private companies to provide access to recycling, it is possible to create a system in which everybody is a winner. Perhaps one day the largest landmark on the prairies will no longer be the local landfill. ■

SUMA solicited articles from the four participants in the 2012 Saskatchewan Legislative Intern Program. We asked them to choose a topic, form an opinion, and submit an article supporting it. Elliott Bourgeault was one of the interns.



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Does co-operation mean amalgamation?

By Cody Gieni, 2012 Saskatchewan Legislative Intern

Remember the Task Force on Municipal Legislative Renewal in 2000? Its purpose was to consider the role and responsibilities of municipal government in Saskatchewan for the future; confirm or set directions for the evolution and development of municipal governance; define and clarify the relationship between provincial and municipal governments; and make recommendations for municipal renewal. The reorganization was recommended for all municipalities and would have created a form of regional government encompassing rural and urban areas within large co-coordinating municipal jurisdictions. These jurisdictions would be responsible for

regional concerns such as water services, transportation, and municipal planning. The existing rural and urban entities would continue, but with more limited responsibilities focused on local needs.

At the time there was little support for the idea from urban or rural municipalities. Twelve years later, with fewer barriers and one less rural municipality, one can conclude that municipalities see little sense in amalgamation.

However, the amalgamation debate, unlike the task force's report, is not dead. At its annual general meeting this spring, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce passed a resolution calling on the province

to move to a municipal system with the fiscal, planning and corporate capacity to manage their infrastructure needs. If the province is content with the current municipal structure, the Chamber would like to see the development of regional bodies, similar to those in British Columbia, to provide professional services to Saskatchewan municipalities.

Municipalities have varying degrees of service and efficiency, and different economic bases. Some have oil wells located within their borders – which can be taxed – and others do not. This causes differences in taxing capacity and the ability to finance services among municipi-

palties. The Chamber sees an opportunity to improve economies of scale, strengthen the development of regional priorities and allow local governments to undertake significant infrastructure projects.

However, amalgamation is as much a political/democracy issue as it is an economic issue.

Municipalities are democratic and political institutions and we should consider their effectiveness in this role. Often, they are called upon to adjudicate among conflicting choices and opportunities, resulting in public policy. The Chamber of Commerce does not appear to recognize that municipalities are more than service-delivery agencies.

The Premier has said the government will not force amalgamation, but the issue has come up recently in the Standing Committee on Intergovernmental Affairs and Justice during consideration of Bill No. 20 – The Planning and Development Act, 2011. The bill provides a framework for the voluntary formation of planning districts. The goal of the districts is to improve opportunities for inter-municipal co-operation, dispute resolution, and efficient service delivery. The bill is a response to some municipalities' difficulty planning and managing their development. Issues are often regional, and the solution requires inter-municipal collaboration. Infrastructure is expensive and regional planning will help municipalities work together. The former Minister of Municipal Affairs, **Darryl Hickie** said that in no way is this to be understood as amalgamation. However, he was somewhat unclear on the governance structure of these districts.

Questions remain: Are they merely advisory? Will they be staffed? Will they spend money? To whom are they accountable?

Inter-municipal collaboration is already going on in Saskatchewan. The Mid-Sask Municipal Alliance (MSMA) consists of five towns, four RMs, two villages and one resort village. It formed through consultation with the Municipal Capacity Development Program. The area faces issues with housing, infrastructure, health and educational services, major developments (BHP's Jansen Lake mine) and retaining citizens. The alliance members recognize the need to work together. **Bruce Eleke**, one of the MSMA chairs, noted that this planning alliance will not necessarily lead to amalgamation. Neighbouring governments have a lot in common, including a desire for continued control over their jurisdictions. The hope is that through collaboration and competition the MSMA will work to sensibly distribute the economic and social needs created by local development.

It is clear that the government will not move to force amalgamation. However, as the existence of the Planning and Development Act and the MSMA highlight, collaboration in an effort to solve mutual problems is a viable option. Fewer local administrators will not make the problems they face go away any faster. The proper support for intermunicipal planning might. There is no political appetite for amalgamation, nor is there a desire for municipalities to jump on a bandwagon they do not control. As demonstrated by the Chamber's recent recommendation, there is a desire to provide support for municipalities to effectively

collaborate on long-term solutions.

The fundamental question is control and power over decision-making. Inefficiency may be seen as a small price to pay for retaining control. Regardless, there is little doubt that municipalities need the support to effectively work together. The question is: does the provincial government agree? ■

SUMA solicited articles from the four participants in the 2012 Saskatchewan Legislative Intern Program. We asked them to choose a topic, form an opinion, and submit an article supporting it. Cody Gieni was one of the interns.

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CHANGING LOW VOTER TURNOUT

By Jason Kiefer, 2012 Saskatchewan Legislative Intern

Voter turnout rates are low, and getting lower. The last Canadian federal election had 61 per cent of eligible voters turn out, and Saskatchewan's provincial election saw 66 per cent. Canada's lowest percentages are in the municipal sector. Saskatchewan is no exception. In Regina's 2009 civic election, 25 per cent of those eligible cast a vote. Some forecast a higher turnout in the upcoming Regina election because current mayor **Pat Fiocco** is not seeking re-election and the new stadium is a hot-button issue. The increased voter rate in Saskatoon's 2003 election (from 26 per cent to 52 per cent) is largely attributed to the downtown casino referendum. The 2006 election numbers fell back to 37 per cent. Even if it is comparably higher than the previous one or two elections, trends suggest that turnout for the upcoming Regina election will still be low.

Our democratic system is harmed by such low turnout rates. The essence of our democratic system is citizens voting for representatives to make important decisions affecting society. Countless men and women have fought to preserve this

right—this social responsibility. When only a portion of the population votes, it can skew election campaigns and policies in favour of groups that are more likely to vote. The fight for the universal vote was not just about equality in voting rights; everyone voting was supposed to ensure the best leaders were elected.

Something else to consider is the number of elected officials in the municipal sector. Statistics from 1992 showed 96 per cent of US elected officials were from local jurisdiction rather than state or federal jurisdictions. Comparing the number of mayors, councillors and aldermen in Canada to the provincially and federally elected officials shows a comparable picture here. The municipal sector is massive, yet is being ignored by voters.

Recommendations on increasing voter turnout can be formed based on research, and other levels of governments' experience. A study by Brock University professors **Joseph Kushner** and **David Siegel** looked at a 2003 election in St. Catharines, Ontario. It concluded that the typical voter was a homeowner, active in either the community or politics. Education and higher income were not significant factors. These

are not much different than findings from studies on the provincial and federal sectors, and all have found that young people have the worst turnout rate. Newer studies also show that people who do not vote at a young age carry that habit with them as they age. The perception of the value of voting has changed as generations grow up with the universal right to vote.

One suggested solution to increase voter turnout is giving students in grade school more education on the Canadian political system. The idea is that more informed young people are more likely to vote. This should lead to citizens who are more informed about the political system and their responsibilities as citizens, but as mentioned earlier, higher education is not a significant factor. Others that have tried this approach had limited success in increasing turnout.

The most proven way to increase voter turnout to very high levels is mandatory voting. Numerous countries have implemented mandatory voting, including Australia. Australians that skip voting without valid reason pay a small fine (\$15-\$20 Canadian). Mandatory voting has existed in some form in Australia for nearly 100 years. Surveys show an approval rating of about 70 per cent.

Some might not like the idea of governments telling them what to do, but there are other duties governments expect from citizens, such as paying taxes. Also, about three per cent of voters in Australia scratch their ballot. This is a better option than staying at home; it engages citizens in the act of voting and hopefully spurs more interest in the next election. Scratched ballots are a reminder that the government is not forcing citizens to choose a candidate; they are telling citizens they must cast a ballot.

Municipalities are best suited to implement mandatory voting because of their already-low rate of voter turnout. Urban governments can provide a bottom-up solution with mandatory voting by getting people in the habit. Studies show that those that vote once, vote often and across all sectors, so getting a person to vote once can lead to voting in other elections. Getting people to vote in municipal elections will increase numbers at higher levels. When political parties can predict groups likely to vote, they focus additional attention on those groups. This means more attention from provincial and federal parties for municipalities with the high voter turnout rates that mandatory

“THE ESSENCE OF OUR DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM IS CITIZENS VOTING FOR REPRESENTATIVES TO MAKE IMPORTANT DECISIONS AFFECTING SOCIETY.”

voting produces. Candidates in municipal elections with mandatory voting would need to ensure their campaigns reach every citizen. I would also suggest that the education idea mentioned earlier should accompany mandatory voting to help children grow into knowledgeable voters.

Given the municipal elections set to take place across Saskatchewan, hopefully citizens already of voting age remember that voting is a civic duty. If not, perhaps they can get a little nudge in following elections from the implementation of mandatory voting.

Voting is a form of engagement into the political realm. In the US, underrepresented groups such as African-Americans and Latinos are more likely to hold elected positions in the municipal sector than higher levels of government. They had 50 per cent and 32 per cent representation

respectively, while the federal, state and county levels combined were only 18 per cent and 15 per cent. One reason is fewer barriers to entry at the municipal level. Perhaps, instead of deciding to scratch the ballot because no candidate satisfies their personal requirements, citizens will consider alternatives such as encouraging the candidacy of someone they support. This is another way voting can lead to more community engagement and why the municipal sector is best suited to lead the way for mandatory voting in Canada. ■

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Being BOLD

Ontario town re-imagines concept of 'federal government' to battle Industry Canada

Passing through the quiet streets of Oakville, you would hardly find anything amiss. The small Ontario community (small by Ontario standards – it is nearly the size of Regina) sits peacefully on the edge of Lake Ontario, where it plays host to award-winning gardens, a waterfront, and annual jazz and arts festivals. However, this picturesque landscape has fast become the front line in a precedent-setting clash between Canadian municipalities and the federal government.

Here, the spotlight is on phone towers. At present, municipalities have no formal role in approving tower installations. Ottawa has the exclusive responsibility to manage and approve radio-communications facilities. The town, however, accuses Ottawa of using municipalities as a front against upset residents when unpopular towers are constructed. At a recent conference of Canadian municipalities in Saskatoon, Oakville Mayor **Rob Burton** berated industry and government officials, calling Industry Canada's consultation process "unbelievably dishonest" and "fraudulent to its core."

"You have a federal, exclusive jurisdiction and you're trying to make us wear the citizen opposition to what you do. . . What Oakville has said is: We're out of here. We're not playing. It's a rigged game."

One councillor drew wide applause when he declared Industry Canada's lack of engagement to be "a real humanitarian issue."

With strong public support, Oakville Town Council has taken up the banner on behalf of Canadian municipalities and is challenging Industry Canada's approach to tower placement.

With little official ability for recourse, the town has acted creatively. The council passed an amendment to their telecommunications protocol, and now requires all tower applications receive a letter of endorsement from the local Member of Parliament. The town claims that if municipalities are kept out of tower placement because the industry is in federal jurisdiction, then the federally elected representative should be qualified to act as judge.

The goal of the MP clause, as Mayor Burton explains, is to force the federal government to take accountability for the power it reserves for itself. "Ottawa was basically trying to suck and blow at the same time by pretending we had the say. We were really tying the local face of the federal government to the matter."

Currently, Conservative **Terrence Young** represents the Oakville constituency. However, the Mayor sees no reason to alter the protocol if an opposition member takes over. "Ultimately it's federal, and they're federal. They're still the face of the federal government, lower case. When they're a member of the party in power then they're a member of the Government, upper case. Either way it serves to draw the line straight back to Ottawa."

However interesting the tactic, the Oakville approach is unlikely to convince its sceptics. Its chief opponent is a strong one: the Canadian Constitution. Mayor Burton is misguided in his understanding of an MP's role. Reinforced in Canada's structure of government is a concept known as the separation of powers. In Canada, this means that laws are written by MPs (and Senators), enforced by the Prime Minister, and judged by the courts. As the work of Industry Canada falls exclusively to the Prime Minister and his cabinet, asking for the local MP's consent on phone towers is as inappropriate as asking for the MP's consent to court judgments.

Bernard Lord, former Premier of New Brunswick and current President of the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association, made this point eloquently at the conference. "The MP is part of the legislative branch, not the executive branch. The decisions are made by the executive branch.

"Your MP could be sitting in the curtains in Parliament and have no impact at all. So asking your MP to overrule the executive branch is not constitutional."

David McGrane, a professor of Political Studies at the University of Saskatchewan, agrees the provision appears unconstitutional – and for an even more obvious reason. Although the municipality can choose under what circumstances to give its approval, municipal governments cannot in fact place conditions on Ottawa. "It's simply not in their jurisdiction to appoint the MP as final arbitrator for a cell phone tower. If somebody wanted to take the municipal government to court, the municipal government would lose very quickly," he says.

All may not be lost, however. In the legal world, yes – Oakville's approach is about as sensible as holding a season ticket holder responsible if the Riders lose. Young acknowledges the MP clause is "mischief" and that "there is no basis in law for any such power." But, that said, this is the world of politics where rules matter much less than perception. And as a PR move, it's brilliant.

Even if the MP has no formal way to overrule Industry Canada, the move has certainly encouraged him to be active on the issue. To everyone without a political science degree, the prospect of holding a local MP accountable for Ottawa's decisions sounds perfectly reasonable, especially when the member is a Conservative. But Young has done exactly what an MP can do – draw attention to the issue in Ottawa. Young says proudly that he is "fully engaged" in the situation, and his record backs it up. The MP has issued press releases, made statements in the House of Commons, and raised his concerns both within the party and to the Minister. So while Oakville could never hope to enforce its MP clause in practice, it may just succeed in achieving a much loftier goal – changing the nationwide relationship between Industry Canada and municipalities.

In the end, the odds that one MP will singlehandedly change the legislation of a country are small. Still, there is a lesson to learn from Oakville. The first responsibility of elected members is to represent their constituents. And even at the federal level where one municipality's concerns may seem small, to your representative, that issue may make the difference between re-election or unemployment.

Municipalities should be bold in engaging their elected members at both the federal and provincial levels. Politics is local, as they say, and the upper hand lies with the municipality. No elected member can afford to ignore a loud local campaign. And – at worst – the next election is always just a couple of years away, and councillors make for great candidates. ■

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Many thanks are extended to Mayor Ian Hamilton, City Manager Jim Toye, and the City of North Battleford for hosting the SUMA Golf Tournament in July. The event was a great success and fun was had by all! In total, 48 people attended what turned out to be a hotly contested race to the top.

Jim Toye presented the Dennis Draper Award to Eric Upshall, Murray Westby, George Bistrow, and Don Cody (see photo).

Ian Hamilton presented the highly coveted winning team trophy to the best golfers of the day: Jim Toye, Arnie Mckay, Nicole Lerat, and Ray Rajchyba (see photo).

Thank you to all those played a role in planning the tournament, to all the sponsors, and to all those who attended. All of you contributed to an excellent event.





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MARK YOUR CALENDARS

– important events this fall and winter

This year's **regional meetings** will be held in November. Based on feedback from the membership, regional meetings have been changed to happen only once per year in the fall, with an increased focus on an educational component. At the upcoming regional meeting, attendees will elect their new Regional Chair to serve on the SUMA Board of Directors, the Regional Committee representatives and a Regional Vice-Chair. There will also be updates from SUMA and the region, and an education session.

Dates for the regional meetings have been set:

November 13 – Central Region
November 14 – East Central Region
November 15 – Southeast Region
November 16 – Southwest Region
November 19 – West Central Region
November 20 – Northwest Region
November 21 – Northeast Region

Agendas will be out at least a month before the meetings, and locations will be announced once they are determined. Watch the Regional Meeting page on our website (under the Events tab) for details as they become available.

Work is already in full swing for the **108th SUMA convention** in Saskatoon. The convention will run from Sunday, February 3, 2013 to Wednesday, February 6, 2013 at TCU Place. The theme, *Dynamic Communities, Dynamic Leaders*, is fitting as SUMA member communities continue to flourish and grow under the leadership of local governments. Emphasizing leadership is especially important following the municipal elections this fall. Sunday night's festivities will center on a *Fire and Ice* theme.

The host hotel is the Sheraton Cavalier, and information on other hotel accommodations is available on our website. Speaker and author George Cuff will deliver the keynote on Tuesday, and watch for more details on Monday's keynote speaker – a Saskatchewan success story.

Be sure to send in nomination forms for the Meritorious Service Award, the Honourary Membership Award, and the Scoop Lewry Award before the September 19 deadline. Awards will be handed out at the President's Banquet on Tuesday, February 5.

There will also be programs available before convention officially kicks off.

The **Municipal Leadership Development Program** will have modules on Saturday, February 2, 2013. The program is a series of six workshops for elected officials and senior municipal staff designed to strengthen local government leadership. Registration for the modules in February and others in November will open in the fall.

The **Newly Elected Workshop** will be the morning of Sunday, February 3, 2013. The workshop is a great way to welcome new elected officials into local government. Serving on council is more than just attending meetings and this workshop will go over everything that is involved in leading your municipality. Registration forms for the workshop will be out in the fall. ■

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The water we use to brush our teeth. The roads on which we travel. The bridges we cross. The parks where we walk. The sport facilities where we watch our children play. The police and fire equipment that helps keep us safe. Everywhere we go, everything we do, all of it is possible only because of urban infrastructure.

One of the challenges of infrastructure is that, like any other investment, money is necessary up front. A city without modern, effective, efficient infrastructure will not attract world-class companies, will not attract citizens, and will not grow.

Urban governments invest this money up front, but do not reap equal benefits. When new construction begins, it generates new income tax and sales tax revenue, and most of this benefit flows directly to the federal and provincial governments. Urban governments may, someday, see new property tax revenues, but these are limited, late, and not reflective of ongoing growth.

The MOG helped correct this imbalance by sharing a portion of the PST. This has been very helpful on the operations side of our business. Together with the MOG, a long-term infrastructure program will give urban governments the provincial support we need to build the new Saskatchewan.

Economic and population growth are the benefit of investment in urban Saskatchewan. It provides a generous return on investment for the province, directly, through increased revenue, and indirectly, through the benefits of growth.

Investing in urban centres is about building a real partnership. The province invests in urban governments; those governments take that investment and turn it into the foundation for growth. That foundation produces real growth, which powers the economy and produces a return for the province. Everyone does their part, and everyone wins. ■



Revenue sharing – it's only fair

By Laurent Mougeot, CEO, Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association

It all changed in the fall of 2006. For more than 15 years, municipal elected officials had mortgaged their capital investments and infrastructure reserves to fund their ongoing operational needs. Aggressive federal and provincial budget cuts had eliminated most grant and revenue sharing programs. This resulted in a shortfall of approximately \$600 million to Saskatchewan local government operations, from 1991 to 2007.

Reformed legislation regulating urban governments offered more autonomy, and across the province, municipal elected officials had an appetite to put management systems in place to properly address the fiscal challenges faced by their communities. In 2005, after years of lobbying by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and its Big City Mayors' Caucus, the federal Liberal government launched the New Deal Program. The program acknowledged federal interests in the business of local governments – specifically new public infrastructure that would subscribe to the principles of sustainability and environmental stewardship. Federal dollars were finally rolling out on a predictable basis, and Canadian local governments could once again adopt more fiscally responsible plans.

Provincially, the story was not so good. For more than a decade, mayors and councillors had rallied behind the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) asking their provincial association to lobby the Saskatchewan government. They wanted a new municipal operating grant; one based on the concept that urban governments provided services to citizens on behalf of the provincial government and so required a share of provincial revenues to sustain these core operations.

Until 2006, the strategy was simple and consistent: point out a long-outstanding shortfall between the province and urban governments, and then hope the Minister of Municipal Affairs could win the argument at Treasury Board. While there were some increases to the municipal revenue sharing grant in 2005 and 2006, the pace of these adjustments did not appear

local officials. Patience was running short, and a more aggressive strategy was ready.

The results of a joint task force between SUMA and Ministry officials revealed an embarrassing misunderstanding by the province. A senior provincial official reviewed all financial statements from local governments, and saw no municipality had run an operating deficit over the past few years. He didn't understand that legislation states that local governments cannot run operational deficits. In his mind, no deficits meant there was enough cash and so local governments did not need additional funding.

At their 2006 spring meeting, the 13 Saskatchewan cities' mayors had a message for the Province: Saskatchewan needed a new revenue sharing program. Immediately. Every year for the next four years, they wanted increases to the city revenue sharing pool – \$30 million more for operating and \$30 million for capital funding. As the united voice of the urban sector, SUMA applied this call to the needs of Saskatchewan's 437 towns and villages. They added another \$10 million for each side of municipal budgets, and so the '40-40' campaign was devised.

The City Mayors' Caucus and SUMA joined forces and the new strategy went beyond letters and meetings with Ministers. It would take the debate out of the legislature and the boardrooms, and into the public domain, into the media and with the taxpayers. A number of sample ads and billboards were strategically shared among provincial elected officials and civil servants. The message focussed on the inequity between provincial and urban revenues, and how the province enjoyed a significant share of return on investments made by cities, towns and villages.

It was not long before the provincial government got wind of the mounting public campaign and contacted members of SUMA's Executive Committee and mayors of the major cities. Neither the Premier nor the Minister had much of an interest in taking the debate public.

So, on a November afternoon, the Deputy Premier called SUMA's Vice-

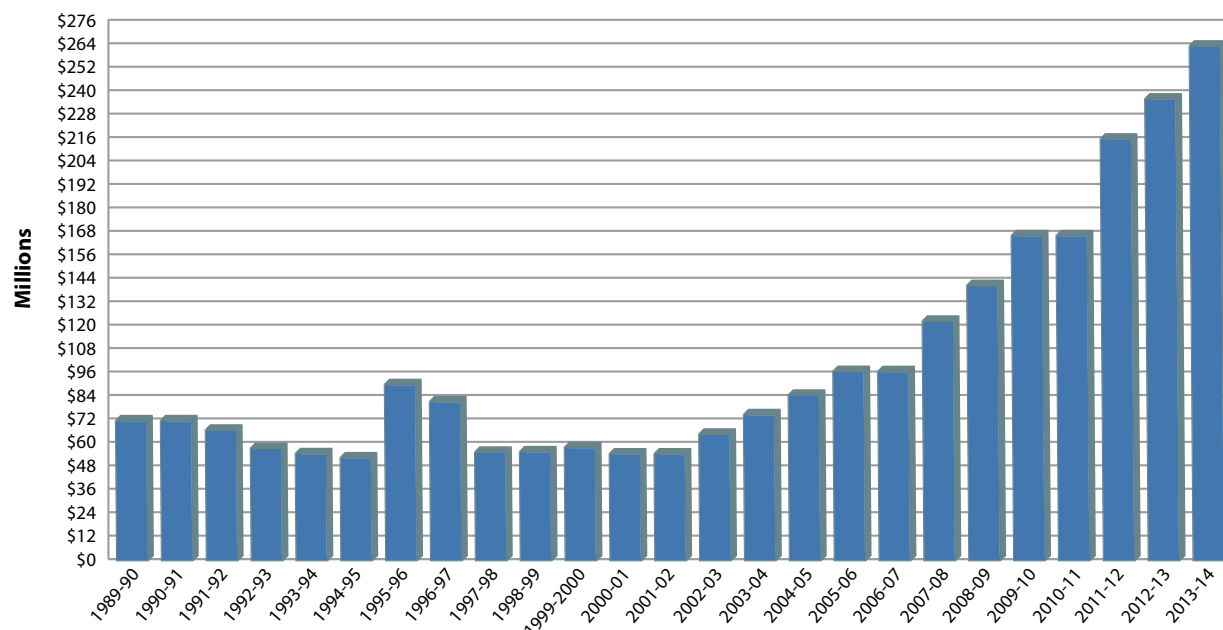
President of Cities. Oddly enough, both of them were on their way home to Yorkton from Regina. Vehicles stopped along Highway 10, and the basis of a settlement was discussed: the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and the Chief Executive Officer of SUMA would meet the next day and pen the key principles of a new funding program. They would focus first on municipal operating needs, and then quantify infrastructure needs. While funding would remain unconditional (a key element for SUMA) the formula would ensure provincial contributions reflected provincial interests. Funding would be tied to the economy – the parties would share good times and bad. All sectors would bring the highest competencies to the table. Most importantly, the program would be predictable and long term.

The parties then began the process acknowledging shared interest and a new fiscal relationship between the province and local governments. Recognizing that each sector had unique needs and challenges, four working groups formed the base of the partnership – one each for cities, towns and villages, rural, and northern local governments. Administrators brought knowledge of their respective sectors and challenges. Each group appointed co-chairs (municipal and provincial) who met on a regular basis. Project charters provided the foundation for work plans and coordination of research, sharing results between the sectors.

At last, there was a shared sense of progress and engagement, but it was provincial election time. In came a majority government under a brand new party – one that had never held power before. And the stakes were high.

SUMA promptly engaged with the new Premier, **Brad Wall**, and met with the Minister responsible for local governments as soon as the new cabinet was sworn in. SUMA was able to secure a commitment from the Minister that movement toward the new revenue sharing formula would carry on as planned. The key principles were sound and reflected the spirit of a healthy relationship. The Minister further

Annual Provincial Revenue Sharing With Local Governments



committed to completing the research on the new municipal operating grant in time for the next provincial budget.

The working groups continued. Cities took the lead and shared the results. The first step looked at the main areas of municipal service delivery to identify where they tied in with provincial interests. The leading question was: "If a city quit providing this service, how would it impact the province?"

For example, law enforcement reflects a high level of provincial interest. Enforcing provincial and federal laws is the majority of what municipal police services do. Minimal resources are spent on municipal bylaws. However, there is a more limited provincial interest in municipal services tied to properties, such as water, street maintenance, and waste management. In this first analysis of provincial interests, policing, emergency response, parks and recreation, and public transit were identified as areas of shared interest.

The next phase quantified the costs of those services. Assessment was based on municipal financial statements for each sector. They assigned a percentage of the operating costs to the Government of Saskatchewan based on the level of provincial interest in each area.

Municipal governments had moved to an interest-based approach. Numbers quantified and extracted from a shared-interest approach and applied to real financial data became defensible in front of

Treasury Board. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs moved from being just another ministry to an advocate and partner on behalf of all Saskatchewan taxpayers.

Based on the science of the shared-interest model, municipalities could invoice the province for services they delivered on a daily basis. That collective invoice was bigger than anyone could have imagined. It was also very close to one point of the provincial sales tax (PST). Premier Wall seized that opportunity quickly.

As a neighbour to Alberta, the option of reducing the PST rather than handing over one cent to the municipal sector must have been tempting to Premier Wall. He did, however, realize the value of assuming the provincial share of interest in the *business* of municipal service delivery.

At the SUMA Convention in February of 2009, the Premier announced the Municipal Operating Grant to urban delegates and residents of Saskatchewan. The new program would grow with the economy, and municipalities could take comfort in the predictable and unconditional funding. And so began a new era of meaningful relationship between urban governments and the government of Saskatchewan.

Twenty per cent of provincial sales tax revenue is still distributed among local governments. The formula uses PST revenue data from the previous fiscal period, allowing cities to approve their operating and capital budgets before the new fiscal

year begins in January, rather than the traditional approval in April. The growth of the revenue sharing pool for local government has increased by 87 per cent since 2007-08. Today, this operating provides \$110 million more annually than it did just five years ago. In the current fiscal year, the total amount invested in local operations is \$237.4 million, and we know already that next year will see a 11.4 per cent increase and move to \$264.4 million.

Operating under the guidance of a clear project charter with joint research and collaborative policy development is now the norm for the province and SUMA. A more progressive urban agenda has emerged, and quantitative research and interest-based discussion is leading public policy foundation.

Lessons learned:

- Create a respectful environment. A true partnership cannot exist otherwise.
- Identify your core values and principles at the outset. It will help you stay focussed and engaged.
- Communicate your interests. Understand the other party's interests. Identify common objectives.
- Work the process out with your partners. Put it in writing and share it with the stakeholders.
- Commit proper resources and bring the most competent individuals to the table. ■

108th SUMA Convention

February 3-6, 2013
TCU Place, Saskatoon, SK

THEME:

Dynamic Communities, Dynamic Leaders

HOST HOTEL:

Sheraton Cavalier

(visit SUMA's website for accommodation information)

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Sunday Night Theme: *Fire and Ice*
- Tuesday's Keynote Speaker:
George Cuff
- Tuesday Night: President's Banquet
& Award Presentations



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SUMAdvantage

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SUMAdvantage is a strategic partnership between SUMA, our program partners and our members.

A SUMAdvantage partner gains the best possible access to the Saskatchewan municipal market – 450 member municipalities that expend more than \$2 billion per year for the delivery of programs, services, and infrastructure to the 82 per cent of Saskatchewan residents that live within urban boundaries.

SUMA members enjoy excellent group buying discounts and receive the best in customer service from SUMAdvantage partners.



SUCCESS OFFICE
SYSTEMS
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RICOH OFFICE
MACHINES

Craig Charuk, owner of SUCCESS Office Systems, sat down recently with *Urban Voice* to discuss his company's products and its relationship with SUMA members.

Q - Next year marks the 10th year of your company's partnership with SUMA and its members. To what do you attribute this successful business alliance?

A – We offer fair, competitive pricing and exceptional onsite local service of all our equipment by fully trained service

technicians. Our newest models are always made known to SUMAdvantage members through our local sales representatives and online at www.successos.com.

Q - When considering a printer, copier or fax machine what are some of the considerations for a municipality when it comes to purchase vs. lease?

A – The most important consideration is comparing a depreciating asset vs. a monthly expense. Overall, they end up 'costing' the same. It's a matter of budget and preference. Each individual situation is different.

Q - SUCCESS markets RICOH systems. What are the main selling features of RICOH machines?

A – Simply put, RICOH systems are solid. Their reliability, ease-of-use, and eco-friendly features are second to none!

Q - What is the average time of service for an office machine?

A – As with any technology, the normal service life is three to five years, depending on how much the machine is used.

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"It pleases me to say RICOH is the market leader in the environmental area."

Q - Do you service remote municipalities?

A - Absolutely! Our service technicians can do telephone and web diagnostics of all RICOH devices and, if necessary, come to your office to repair your equipment.

Q - According to the SUMA website, the SUCCESS SUMAdvantage program is a 'green' leader.

How important is being 'green' in today's business climate?

A - We have seen more and more emphasis on the environmental issues and their impact within our industry over the last few years. It pleases me to say RICOH is the market leader in the environmental area. ■



Ricoh's Aficio MP C75015P Colour copier with fast print speed

The SUMA Election Supply program provides a one-stop shop with the assurance that supplies will be up to date and a staff member available to answer questions or refer you to the appropriate contacts at Municipal Affairs.

SUMA offers the following election supplies:

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Forms

Cardboard Ballot Boxes

Metal Seals

Template for Blind Voters

Pencils

Cardboard Polling Stations

Paper Seals



Discount offered on ballot boxes and polling booths over 50. Inquire to the SUMA office on pricing.

For order forms visit www.suma.org.

Questions can be directed to Tania Meier at tmeier@suma.org or 306-525-4379.

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SUMADVANTAGE *Programs*



Following is a list of our SUMAdvantage programs by category. To learn more about a program, visit the SUMA website.

If you need additional information, please contact SUMA's Event and Corporate Services Manager, **Tania Meier**, at 306-525-4379 or email tmeier@suma.org

OFFICE AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Apparel, Promotional Items and Sporting Goods	Prince Albert Source for Sports	306-764-3285	www.pasourceforsports.ca
Election Material	SUMA	306-525-3727	www.suma.org
Lapel Pins	Laurie Artiss Limited	800-667-8168	www.thepinpeople.ca
Municipal Magazine	Municipal World	306-525-3727	www.suma.org
Network and Email Solutions	Lexcom Systems Group Inc.	306-545-9242	www.lexcom.ca
Office Machines	SUCCESS Office Systems	800-667-8173	www.successos.com
Office Products	Supreme Basics	800-667-3690	www.supremebasics.com
Shipping Labels	SUMA	306-525-3727	www.suma.org
Software	Acrodex	306-584-3401	www.acrodex.com

PUBLIC WORKS/PARKS AND LEISURE

Building Valuations	Suncorp Valuations	800-764-4454	www.suncorpvaluations.com
Cat and Dog Tag Licensing and Animal Control	Ketchum Manufacturing	306-525-3727	www.suma.org
Equipment Rental	Hertz Equipment Rental	800-777-2700	www.hertzequip.com
Fuel Supply	Prairie Fuel Advisors	800-807-3750	www.prairiefueladvisors.ca
Janitorial Supplies	Chatterson Janitorial Supplies	800-667-8178	www.chatterson.com
Mosquito Control	Agrium Direct Solutions	800-661-2991	www.growercentral.com
Municipal Tires	Kal Tire	Contact nearest location	www.kaltire.com
Municipal Tires	Michelin	Purchase through Kal Tire, Saskatoon Wholesale Tire or Graham's Tire.	
Natural Gas	Connect Energy Partnership	866-934-6918	www.connectenergy.ca
Recycled Rubber Products	Assiniboia Rubber Recycling Inc.	306-642-5599	www.recyclerubber.ca
Solar Pool Heating	Kelln Solar Consulting Ltd.	306-731-2224	www.kellnsolar.com
Traffic Signs	Signal Industries Ltd.	800-565-9443	www.signalindustries.ca

HOTEL AND VEHICLE

Fleet Management and Vehicle Rental	Enterprise Rent-a-car	800-736-8227	www.enterpriserentacar.ca
Regina Hotel	Regina Inn	800-667-8162	www.reginainn.com
Regina Hotel	Travelodge Regina	306-586-3443	www.travelodgeregina.com
Saskatoon Hotel	Park Town Hotel	800-667-3999	www.parktownhotel.com
Saskatoon Hotel - 2013 Convention Host Hotel	Sheraton Cavalier	306-652-6770	www.sheratoncavaliersaskatoon.com
Saskatoon Hotel	Travelodge Saskatoon	888-278-4209	www.travelodgesaskatoon.com

FINANCIAL

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Mountainview Systems	15	877-244-5434	www.mvs.ca
MPE Engineering Ltd.	31	866-329-3442	www.mpe.ca
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Professional Building Inspections	13	306-536-1799	www.Pro-Inspections.ca
Provincial Pothole and Paving	9	306-540-5425	www.provincialpothole.com
Public Service Commission of Canada	19	866-707-7152	www.psc-cfp.gc.ca
reclaimasphalt.com	18	866-754-0848	www.reclaimasphalt.com
Royal Hotel Group	33	888-882-9378	www.royalhotelgroup.ca
SaskAlta	10	306-352-7275	www.saskalta.ca
Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency	19	800-667-7262	www.sama.sk.ca
Saskatchewan Association for Resource Recovery	4	877-645-7275	usedoilrecyclingsk.com
Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association	21	306-586-1805	www.saskheavy.ca
Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation	35	306-787-2105	www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca/shf
Saskatchewan In Motion	7	306-780-9248	www.saskatchewaninmotion.ca
Saskatchewan Scrap Tire Corporation	25	306-721-8473	www.scraptire.sk.ca
SaskCulture	8	306-780-9289	www.saskculture.sk.ca
SaskTel	48	800-727-5835	www.sasktel.com
SaskWater	2	888-230-1111	www.saskwater.com
SWEEP	21	888-350-6555	sweepit.ca
TRAK Ventures Fire & Safety	27	204-724-2281	www.trakventures.ca
Warner Industries	40	800-667-1930	warnerindustries.ca
Western Municipal Tax Solutions	9	306-371-0424	www.westernmunicipal.ca



To reach decision makers in Saskatchewan's urban governments through *Urban Voice* magazine and its targeted readership, contact Rod at your earliest convenience to discuss your company's promotional plans for 2012.

Rod Evason, *Marketing Manager*

Email: rod@kelman.ca Phone: 877-985-9710 Fax: 866-985-9799

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is more than just talk

As we continue to deliver valuable information through the pages of this magazine, in a printed format that is appealing, reader-friendly and not lost in the proliferation of electronic messages that are bombarding our senses, we are also well aware of the need to be respectful of our environment. That is why we are committed to publishing the magazine in the most environmentally-friendly process possible. Here is what we mean:

- We use lighter publication stock that consists of recycled paper. This paper has been certified to meet the environmental and social standards of the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) and comes from responsibly managed forests, and verified recycled sources making this a RENEWABLE and SUSTAINABLE resource.
- Our computer-to-plate technology reduces the amount of chemistry required to create plates for the printing process. The resulting chemistry is neutralized to the extent that it can be safely discharged to the drain.
- We use vegetable oil-based inks to print the magazine. This means that we are not using resource-depleting petroleum-based ink products and that the subsequent recycling of the paper in this magazine is much more environment friendly.
- During the printing process, we use a solvent recycling system that separates the water from the recovered solvents and leaves only about 5 per cent residue. This results in reduced solvent usage, handling and hazardous hauling.
- We ensure that an efficient recycling program is used for all printing plates and all waste paper.
- Within the pages of each issue, we actively encourage our readers to REUSE and RECYCLE.
- In order to reduce our carbon footprint on the planet, we utilize a carbon offset program in conjunction with any air travel we undertake related to our publishing responsibilities for the magazine.

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