



## Does the Framework Agreement mean construction season?

"Hallelujah!"

With one word, Pat Fiacco, the Mayor of Regina, summed it up, Saskatchewan and the Federal Government have finally signed the Building Canada Framework agreement.

He made this simple, but emphatic statement at the official signing on Friday, April 11 in front of the Saskatchewan Minister of Municipal Affairs, Bill Hutchinson, and the Federal Minister of Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Gerry Ritz (on behalf of Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities).

The agreement promises to add more than \$635-million in provincial and federal infrastructure funding into the pockets of the Saskatchewan municipalities between 2008 and 2014. Of that, \$190-million will be directly earmarked to communities with less than 100,000 people under the Building Canada Fund.

"Obviously this is a big day for us. We've been waiting for this for quite some time," said Mayor Fiacco at the signing. "This agreement is an important first step to beginning work on some major projects."

SUMA President Allan Earle applauded the Brad Wall Government for stepping up to the plate and signing the agreement especially in light of new census numbers showing a population growth of 16,492 people in 2007, an increase of 1.7 per cent -- the biggest one-year jump in Saskatchewan's population since 1952. But he cautions waiting too long before releasing the dollars to communities.

"Obviously we are very pleased to see this finally done," said SUMA President Allan Earle. "We have billions of dollars in unmet local needs for water and wastewater upgrades, public transportation and energy conservation projects. Hopefully the provincial and federal governments can work together

to get the money out sooner than later."

He pointed out that it is critical that these infrastructure dollars start to flow to municipalities in time for the 2008 construction season. SUMA and its member municipalities have been waiting for this announcement for more than 14 months.

"The province has had more than enough time to study this issue. We expect dollars to flow into Saskatchewan's municipalities without further delay," said President Earle. "It's very simple: without money roads turn to dust, sewer systems collapse and the safety of our communities becomes a concern. These are the issues councils face on a daily basis. We need the BCF money if communities are to maintain and improve infrastructure."

Several other provinces have already signed Infrastructure Framework Agreements with the Federal Government. Signing the framework agreement is the first

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The Building Canada Fund framework agreement has been signed. While more work needs to be done, Saskatchewan's municipalities know \$635-million will flow.

Revenue sharing may be in the news, but once again we are left with ad hoc money. It has been indicated that October 31 is the date for a revenue sharing agreement - only time will tell.

Introducing Jennifer Hurst: We have a new Policy Advisor at SUMA. Meet Jenn, our new Cam Baker, only a little shorter and a lot more cheery.

Interest in our Self Insurance program is at a record high. In this issue we break down the numbers and show our members how the program works.

There are some great deals available through SUMA's Advantage program.

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step towards approval of a more detailed agreement on a 5-10 year Saskatchewan Infrastructure Plan. Funding is also subject to approval and signing of appropriate funding agreements by the two governments.

The Canada - Saskatchewan Framework Agreement outlines how the Building Canada plan will operate in the province. It also establishes a governance framework through which the two governments will work together to identify and address infrastructure priorities. Saskatchewan infrastructure initiatives in eligible categories will also have the opportunity to benefit from the Public-Private Partnership Fund and the Gateways and Border Crossings Fund. In addition, Saskatchewan municipalities receive a full rebate on the GST they pay, for local infrastructure priorities.