



SUMA Board of Director Jim Scarrow thanks Chief Clarence Louie after his keynote address Tuesday, February 5 at SUMA's 103rd Annual Convention.

## Chief Louie the hit of Convention

### *Osoyoos leader makes his pitch for economic development on Canadas First Nation's land*

The man received two standing ovations and delivered a message that caught some off guard.

"Join the real world. Get off welfare. Quit sniffing. If your life sucks, it's because you suck," said Chief Clarence Louie in his keynote address that many thought was the highlight of SUMA's Convention. "Our ancestors worked for a living; so should you."

A message like this can't be delivered by most, but it clearly resonates when Chief Louie, the man who single handedly turned around the fortunes of a bankrupt B.C. First Nation, gives it.

He is a controversial figure in Canada. Many First Nations leaders feel he his dogma of economic development oversimplifies the troubles on many of Canada's reserves, but to Chief Louie, he is only telling it as he sees it.

He was elected Chief of the Os-

oyoos Indian Band at the age of 24 and quickly set to work changing the fortunes of the people who chose him to lead.

Less than ideal land, high welfare rates, rampant unemployment and a culture of dependency, corruption and violence all stood in the way of his grand vision.

It's twenty year's later and Chief Louie has turned the Osoyoos Indian Band into a economic powerhouse, directly injecting an estimated \$40-million into B.C.'s economy. It wasn't a miracle; it was a combination of hard work and overcoming stereotypes that stood in their way.

"It's a big problem if the band office is the largest employer on the reserve," he said. "Our companies employ more than 1,000 people. That's includes a large number of non-aboriginal people. Like many areas of Canada, we have too many jobs and not enough

people. We are very focused on the future, and we realize that we create this future by our actions. The single most important key to First Nation self-reliance is economic development."

Chief Louie encouraged municipal leaders to get involved with local First Nations and pointed out how successful the relationship between the Osoyoos Indian Band and the town of Osoyoos -- one that took time to develop, but one that made each community stronger than it was.

"I was pleased to see that you invited other First Nation's leaders to your Convention," he said, noting that SUMA's opening ceremonies included FSIN leader Chief Lawrence Joseph and Saskatchewan Métis Nation leader Robert Doucette. "But it can't be token representation. I hate tokenism, maybe I'm a token here, but looking out at all of you, I highly doubt it."

#### Inside this issue

Estevan has won the right to host Flick Off, a nationally televised, carbon neutral, music festival sponsored by Virgin Mobile Canada, MuchMusic, Roots Canada, the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and the non-profit group Environmental Defence.

Our President, Allan Earle shares some of SUMA's 2007, high points and promises more to come in 2008.

We take a look at moving beyond "interim" revenue sharing and towards a predictable long-term formula.

Battleford hosted a sustainable communities workshop. What were some of the highlights?

Our Advantage Partners share some of their services geared towards you, the member!

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Chief Louie suggested for economic development to occur on a reserve, the Band should study the economies of their own region. "If there is forestry, then get into forestry.

The Osoyoos Indian Band was not [traditionally] into wineries; we got into it because there was a market here," he said, adding, "look at how the white people are making money in your region. Do your research."

He also advocated for spending money on reserve land. According to Chief Louie, this is the only way for a First Nation to truly develop economically. But he conceded that it's a two way street and he encouraged his Band members to spend money in the surrounding communities.

*Continued on page 3*

## President's *Voice*

Wow, what a Convention! I'd have to say that SUMA's 2008 Convention was our best ever, and from the feedback I've received, I'm not the only one. It's truly amazing how much information, education and of course, socialization, can be fit into a four day stretch.

I'd like to start by thanking our staff for the wonderful job they did. Planning the Convention is a year long affair, and I bet Shantel and Tania are already hard at work planning next year's. We would be remiss not to acknowledge the hard work and professionalism shown by the Queensbury Centre's staff and management. They ensured that we had everything we needed. And finally, thank-you, our valued members. Without your involvement our Convention couldn't be the highlight of the year it always is.

Now, on to my favourite Convention tidbits!

The Education Sessions were a tremendous success. I have received many compliments on the varied issues and speakers. This year we hosted 15 sessions, with topics ranging from sustainability to self-insurance. Like you, I could only attend a few of them, but if given the chance I would have sat in on a host of others. Check SUMA's website if you missed any that interested you. There are slideshows being posted as they come in from the presenters.

Our opening ceremony was both a bit of an eye opener and an ear ringer. Partners In Motion really got things off to a bang with the firing of the Da Vinci gun and Premier Wall readily acknowledged that the election promise of a 7 per cent increase in revenue sharing in each of the next two years isn't enough. Hopefully he takes his own comments to heart and pry's open the provincial purse strings sooner than later.

If anyone who missed the Ultimate Tailgate Party didn't regret it at the time, they certainly did the next day when they heard how much fun it was. While I never touched the Playstation 3, I did enjoy meeting the Saskatchewan Roughriders on hand: Mike McCullough, Neil Hughes and Jeremy O'Day. And I might also add, GO GIANTS!

As always the Dialogue Sessions with the Ministers was extremely helpful for our members. Very few organizations can get the one-on-one face time that SUMA members do with Cabinet Officials. The Sessions were followed by the Bear Pit with the entire Cabinet. I will be the first to admit, we were pretty easy on Saskatchewan's new Government this time around. That being said, without results, next year may be a much different story.

These were just a few of my favourite Convention moments. But it doesn't end there, our theme "Strength Through Diversity" is a sentiment that we at SUMA truly believe and one that we will continue to advocate.

I look forward to seeing you all again at Regional meetings and again at Convention 2009 next year in Saskatoon!

**SUMA President Allan Earle**

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## Executive Director's *Voice*

Once again, the annual SUMA Convention turned out to be a great gathering of municipal sector fans. As your Executive Director, I know that your employees have put in many long hours to ensure that the convention met your expectations. Since last June, they have researched potential keynote speakers, identified topics for our concurrent education sessions, worked on resolutions, recruited exhibitors for the trade show and planned for the entire logistic of delivering one of the largest municipal events in the country.

I am always impressed with the team effort which goes into this process. Other agencies organizing events of this magnitude will often call upon consultants to plan and deliver such events. SUMA's administrative team has a long standing tradition of putting together this convention, and the collective expertise of all employees is a key ingredient to the success of this event. Our employees know the municipal sector best. They understand the issues at hands and are passionate about their work. They take pride in delivering this special event to our elected officials.

To put things in context, and for those who enjoy numbers, here are a few statistics:

- 910 delegates attended the 2008 Convention. SUMA's convention is one of the largest gatherings of municipal officials in the country.
- 497 municipalities were represented at this year's Convention.
- Fraternal and sponsoring organizations sent 150 officials to this year's convention.
- 86 individuals participated in the Partners' program.
- 93 municipal employees attended the Sediment Control Workshop
- 390 representatives worked at the Municipal Market trade show
- 169 companies and agencies were represented at the trade show, again making SUMA's Municipal Market trade show one of the largest in the country.
- 25 Resolutions were debated on the Convention floor
- 6 Bylaw Amendments were adopted
- 108 boxes of material were shipped from SUMA's office to the Convention Centre
- 6 new strategic partners were presented to the delegates
- One significant announcement by President Earle on the Self Insurance Program: implementation to proceed in 2008!
- Chief Clarence Louie received two standing ovations
- 15 Education sessions were offered (five more than last year)
- 15 Cabinet Ministers and one Premier attended the bear pit session
- 17 Board Members shared the duties of chairing session and hosting events
- 4 Sector meetings were held

Finally, municipalities from all sectors once again came out of this convention speaking with one strong united SUMA voice!

While this special edition of the Urban Voice will highlight in more details the outcomes of the 2008 Convention, let me identify some of the more subtle, yet significant, activities which took place at this event.

SUMA's Executive Committee, Mayor Bobby Woods, Director for the Northern Region, Mayor Jim Scarrow of Prince Albert and I had the opportunity to meet with representatives from the New North to re-energize the relationship which exists between northern municipalities and the association. The outcomes of this meeting clearly suggest that there are many common objectives shared by the two organizations, and that there exist many opportunities for collaboration between the New North and SUMA. We have committed to follow up on these.

Also of significance was the strategic plan report card presented by Director Michael Fougere at the AGM. This report card offers one more tool to hold your Board of Directors and the administrative team jointly accountable for the work they do on your behalf. First, with respect to the objectives they set to guide the administration's annual work plans, and second for the outcomes of those activities.

As we proceed with plans for next year's event in Saskatoon, we continue to value your feedback on the content of our annual Convention. Your suggestions for 2009 can be forwarded to our main email address at [suma@suma.org](mailto:suma@suma.org).

**Laurent Mougeot, MCIP**



# Hibernation in the Bear Pit



## New government given a gentle ride through first SUMA Convention

Representatives of Saskatchewan's cities, towns and villages were easy on the Province's new government through much of 2008's SUMA Convention, including the infamous Bear Pit.

Wednesday's Bear Pit marked the first time the Sask. Party had faced the full SUMA membership as leaders of the province. While not lobbing softballs, the membership was in a generous mood, asking tough questions, but seemingly ready to concede it's too early to go on the offensive with a new government. This was a feeling Premier Brad Wall acknowledged after the one and half hour dialogue session.

"I think there's a certain sense from delegates that we've got a brand new government a couple of months in and so they were raising some constructive issues and providing some

advice," the premier said in the media scrum following the session. "I would bet that future bear pits might get even tougher as we develop a bit of a record ourselves obviously especially around the issue of revenue sharing but I think it was a useful process to go through."

Education Minister Ken Krawetz was quizzed about both school closures and overcrowding. He couldn't commit to anything, saying that the province's boards of education have submitted requests for major projects totalling \$555 million. Of that about \$158 million has been requested for to health and safety requirements. Last year's capital funding was only \$30 million.

"We're trying to identify what the changes will be to the education act regarding how a board pursues a review, whether that be a grade dis-

continuation or school closure," the minister said in a scrum with reporters after the Bear Pit. "The ministry is also working with school boards to define criteria for a school of opportunity, which could see such schools kept open through extra funding allotted to the board."

Other bear pit included expansion of SaskTel Max service into smaller communities, highways infrastructure, fishing licence costs and training programs in the province's prison system.

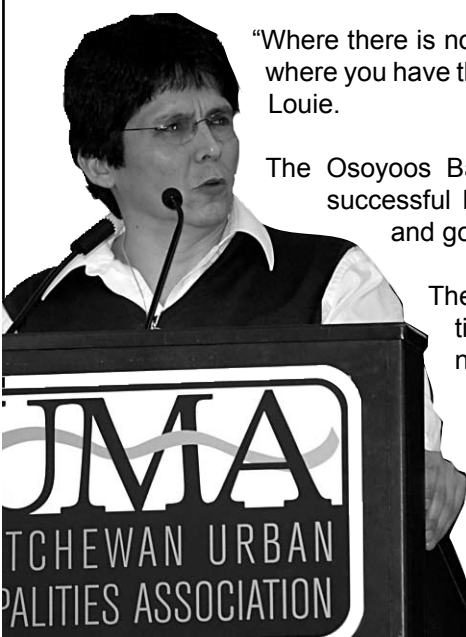
Wall reiterated that the seven per cent increase in municipal revenue-sharing with for each of the next two years is not enough, but added that it is only an interim solution. He said that the province will stick to its election promise until a new revenue sharing arrangement can be put in place.

## Chief Louie speaks at Convention

*Continued from page 1*

"The money has to be spent on the reserve," he said. "Reserves are losing their best and brightest people to the cities because there are no on-reserve opportunities for them; no good jobs and no money."

Chief Louie also took the time to address social spending by the Federal Government. He takes issue with the disproportionate amount of money that has been spent to date on social programs – 92% in the past eight years, compared to just 8% for economic development for First Nations communities.



"Where there is no economic development, that's where you have third world conditions" said Chief Louie.

The Osoyoos Band owns and manages nine successful businesses, including a winery and golf course.

They employ hundred of First Nations people and hundreds on non-aboriginal people.

Chief Louie is happy to point out that this way economic development benefits the entire community.

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## Few cookies in Minister Hutchinson's address

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Municipal leaders at SUMA's Convention gave Saskatchewan's Minister of Municipal Affairs the largest round of applause of the week for one simple admission.

"A seven per cent increase gives (municipalities) a measure of predictability," said Minister Bill Hutchinson. "Clearly more must be done to resolve this issue."

In his address to the Convention Tuesday morning, the Minister Hutchinson said that the good work done by the previous government on the Municipal Sector Strategic Plan (and its revenue sharing agreement component) would be continued after Saskatchewan's new government announces its budget in March.

He listed several "high priorities" of collaboration between municipalities and his government:

- Roadbuilding
- MSSP framework
- Firefighters
- Landfills
- Safe communities
- First Nations inclusion in municipal decision making

He said a long-term government-to-government relationship is important to him and his party citing that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs is a standalone agency and that he had already spent a great deal of time visiting individual Saskatchewan municipalities.

"A government-to-government relationship defines who we are and how we work together," said the Minister. "It is an utmost priority of mine to meet with you personally in your community."

In the 2007-08 provincial budget

urban municipalities were to receive \$67 million this year. A seven per cent increase translates to about \$5 million more in each of the next two years.

SUMA President Allan Earle said after Minister Hutchinson's address that he was pleased with what he heard from Minister Hutchinson, but he wants to see negotiations begin on the MSSP file sooner than later.

"We're not going to go in there pounding and yelling and screaming," President Earle said. "We're certainly going to approach this in as diplomatic a way as we can. We'll probably be able to accommodate one another with an earlier date than what was suggested."

The Minister reiterated some of the commitments made by Premier Wall during his brief address at the opening ceremonies.

He outlined the Government's election campaign promise for a \$300-million loan program to municipalities looking to expand residential lot development (Saskatchewan Infrastructure Growth Initiative – SIGI).

Minister Hutchinson also told the gathered assembly they could expect to see the loan program up and running in April.

There will be two application windows open in 2008 with Minister Hutchinson expecting May 31 for the first intake of applications to close and another intake in the Fall for the 2009 construction season.



# Partners' program cooks up a lot of fun

"We were so well cared for, entertained and fed!" This is just one of the many rave reviews the 2008 Partners' Program received.

The program was held over two days and started each morning at the Regina Inn.

The program kicked off with an interactive Yoga Workshop from Garret Woyrnarski of Yoga Mala and left those that attended feeling refreshed and ready to start their morning.

The first tour on the program lineup was of the newly constructed RCMP Heritage Centre. The tour and interactive film were informative, entertaining and gave the participants a look into the past, present and future of the RCMP.

The group also visited the Casino Regina where the participants got the chance to walk the "Blue Mile" while touring the Casino Regina and seeing a glimpse of the history and development of the Casino. Many commented that this tour was the highlight of the first day.

The second day had the participants split into four groups and entertained by some of the finest Chef's in Regina. The participating restaurants and caterers were; Zest Restaurant, The Willow on Wascana, Evolution Catering & Fine Foods and Greene Goodies.

The Zest Restaurant participants were dazzled by Chef Rob Fuller's Saskatchewan themed menu and left the restaurant armed with new cooking tips and full stomachs.

The Willow on Wascana had Chef Malcolm Craig teaching participants a Saskatchewan themed menu and provided participants with a meal that many commented "was the best meal I've ever had!"

Evolution Catering & Fine Foods, owner Amiee Schulhauser had participants elbow deep in preparing all their own French themed menu items.

Participants were decked out in aprons and hairnets and worked busily to prepare their lunch. All that attended raved about Chef's Aimee personality and excellent teaching skills.

Owner Deighen Greene of Green Goodies, had participants learning the art of sushi making. Deighen's enthusiasm, knowledge of sushi making and organic foods inspired all that attended to eat better and be more conscious consumers.

When participants arrived back to the Regina Inn, all were beaming with excitement from the cooking workshops and noted that this was the highlight of the two day event.



The SUMA staff would like to thank the Board Spouses that offered their assistance and helped to make the program run smoothly. SUMA looks forward to making the 2009 program an even greater success!

## Focused on community growth?

**Learn more about Municipal Cultural Planning at the 2008 SUMA Conference.**

Dr. Greg Baeker, a senior consultant with AuthentiCity, an urban policy practice, will share experiences with municipal cultural planning and how it can work for Saskatchewan communities.

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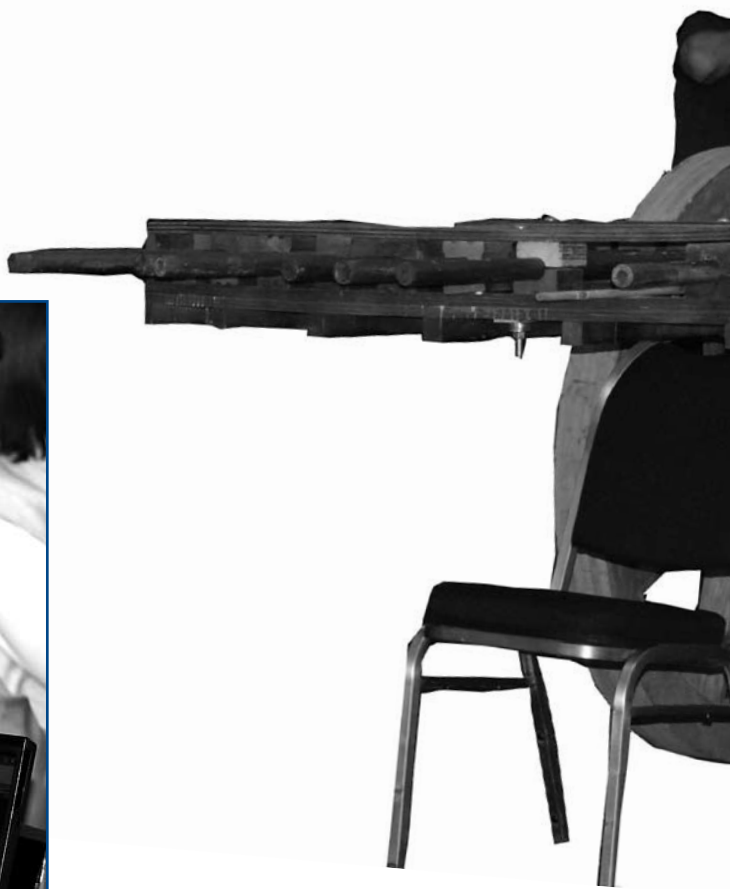
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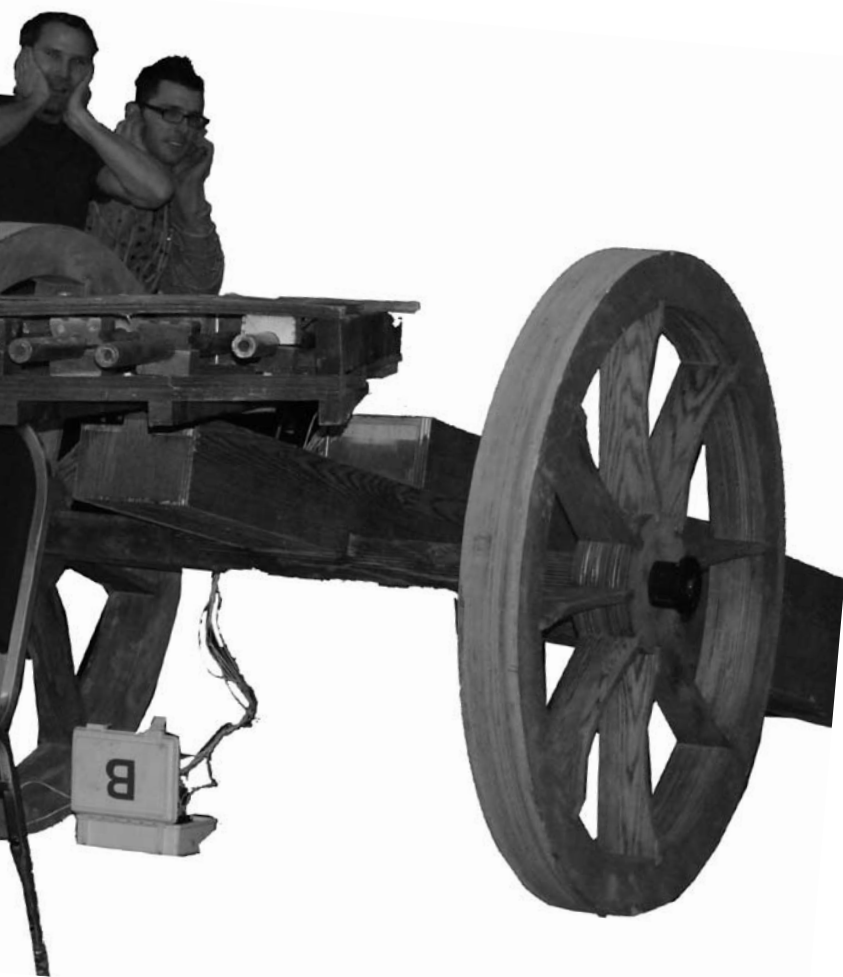
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# rsity - Convention 2008



## Another great convention

SUMA's 103rd Annual Convention "Strength through Diversity" has wrapped up for another year, leaving a trail of fond memories and renewed acquaintances in its wake.

Once again, delegates gathered from virtually every corner of the province to share ideas, create partnerships and speak to government about what's needed to make their communities stronger.

There was much to see in the 4 days. The City of Regina hosted over 1600 delegates, partners and exhibitors. Convention provided 15 education session topics that touched on the issues facing their communities. We tackled "Recruiting and Retaining Doctors", how to "Manage the Boom" and learned how to get "In-Motion" just to name a few.

Chief Clarence Louie challenged the delegates to change the way we think about and deal with First Nations poverty and economic development in our province.

The Municipal Marketplace hosted over 400 exhibitors, 167 booths of products and services provided municipalities with a wealth of cost effective methods, information and expertise.

SUMA was once again proud to recognize the dedicated employees and elected officials who do their community's proud at the President's Banquet, and the entertainment of Big Daddy Tazz was second to none.

All in all another successful year leaving little doubt that communities of all sizes want to be active partners in whatever forum and make positive contributions to the future of their community and province.

**Shantel Lipp, Manager, Member & Corporate Services**

# Fifteen education sessions at SUMA's Convention

The SUMA Convention was more than socializing, Resolutions and Minister's meetings. Delegates got down to work through 15 education sessions. Because of time constraints no one could attend more than three full session. Here is a brief description of the Ed. Sessions. Audio CD's are available for all the sessions and PowerPoint presentations will be posted to the SUMA website as they are made available.

## **E1• Recruiting and Retaining Doctors in Your Community**

Barb Porter, Karen Eisler, John Boquist and Dr. Martin Vogel shared their experiences with doctor recruitment in smaller communities. The recruitment and retention of physicians and nurses in Saskatchewan's communities can be a challenge. To ensure a successful outcome municipalities need to understand the tools and strategies that can be used to secure health professionals in their communities.

## **E2• PSAB 3150 and Asset Management, what do they mean to communities?**

The Public Sector Accounting Board is changing the rules by which we account for our public infrastructure. While Municipalities across Canada are struggling to meet the January, 2009 implementation deadline, many are wondering how to get the most out of their investment of time and resources. Although PS 3150 is an accounting regulation, the information needed to fill its requirements can be used as the basis for improved asset management planning and decision making. This presentation explained PS-3150 requirements and highlight how they can be used to support sustainable infrastructure asset management within the municipal setting. The presenters were Patrick Coulthard and Asset Management Specialist - Community Infrastructure, Hesham Osman PhD. P.Eng.

## **E3• Municipal Risk Management and Self Insurance**

AON Reed Stenhouse VP Ken Murphy and SUMA Executive Director Laurent Mougeot presented. In this session AON provided information about the recent completion of phase 2 of the project in which a final feasibility study was conducted. Findings of the study were provided, along with information regarding coverage to be included, what the plan will look like, and the next steps involved for SUMA and our members. Members were told that in early spring SUMA will be contacting all of our interested member municipalities for a commitment to the program. SUMA will request commitment to the program

via a commitment form and deposit cheque (to be applied to premiums upon implementation) from the municipality. Watch your mail box for further information about the program.

## **E4• Waste Water Effluent & Treatment Strategies**

Environmental and health protection are obvious goals in developing coordinated strategies for wastewater management, but so is clarity about regulations. Thon Phommavong from the Ministry of Environment outlined for delegates how Saskatchewan is working with the Canadian Government and other provinces to develop a "one window" approach to standard setting and enforcement. Officials are also aware that funding for wastewater infrastructure should be based on risk assessment and must be "fair and sustainable."

Dean Shiskowski from Associated Engineering emphasized the importance of an integrated planning approach, encompassing innovative technical alternatives along with local bylaws. Emerging issues keep changing, so both technological and community adaptations must be made.

Lumsden Mayor Vern Barber shared the story of his town's experience with undersized and leaching lagoons. They accessed some FCM Green Fund money to develop a plan but face a bigger expenditure than supported by existing grant programs. Part of the solution was rate adjustments, and they saw a dramatic decrease in water usage.

## **E5• On a Roll in Your Community: Tire Recycling**

**After 10 Years**  
Saskatchewan's tire recycling program recently celebrated its 10th anniversary. Municipalities are key stakeholders in the initiative. Information was shared on the "Community Demonstration Grant Program" that offers funding assistance for municipal capital projects. Theresa McQuoid, the Executive Director of the Sask. Scrap Tire Corp., Curt Taylor, VP of Shercom Industries and Marc Topola of PermaLife Products were on hand to talk about some of the innovative products being made from recycled tires right here in Saskatchewan

## **E6• Managing Employer/Employee Conflict**

Keith Schneider and Ron Hilton were on hand to discuss the role of council as employer. While vital, it can often be overlooked or mishandled with

unfortunate results. This session looked at the roles of council and administration and the relationship between the two. They studied Labour Laws and the pitfalls to avoid, looked at building successful relationships for the benefit of all.

## **E7• Effective Community Fundraising**

Wayne Helquist hosted this informational session focused on the governance, operations, and responsibilities associated with running a successful fundraiser, as well as the recruitment of volunteers needed to develop recreation projects in municipalities that meet community needs and improve quality of life.

## **E8• The Sustainability Tool Kit – Our Future Depends On It!**

A crucial stage of sustainability is the commercialization of infrastructure solutions, said John Lee, President of the Regina-based Communities of Tomorrow agency. He provided examples of projects supported in recent years but emphasized that the agency wants to involve other communities as "living laboratories" for testing innovative technologies and practices.

Jeff Hryhoriw of Zapwell Communications promoted, as at SUMA's fall regional meetings, the funding opportunities offered through the Green Municipal Fund administered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. There are several categories of project funding available—both developmental study grants and project loans—and FCM (including regional facilitators like Jeff) are there to help municipalities access the money for innovative ideas.

Will Oddie of Kelln Solar, based in Lumsden, sung the praises of energy conservation through solar water heating in facilities like municipal swimming pools. He also said that electricity from solar would become more competitive over the next 5-10 years, so municipalities should keep solar collector locations in mind when situating new buildings.

Councillor Tony Leeson from St. Walburg shared the secrets of the town's two annual International Awards for Liveable Communities (LivCom), including "Most Sustainable Community" in any population category. While this success has been noted in SUMA's Urban Voice newsletter, Tony offered many community-tested ("common sense") tips and strategies for becoming a more liveable and sustainable municipality.

*Continued on page 9.*

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# Education sessions had a host of topics

Continued from page 8.

## **E9• Not your Old English Teacher – Plain language writing for government and industry**

Christine Mowat, President of Wordsmith Associates, showed some of the pitfalls common to writing complicated business and municipal documents.

All businesses and governments rely on writing for communication to internal and external customers and clients, more so than anyone is aware.

This workshop was designed to provide clarity for municipal writers by teaching the principles of plain legal language. Participants learned how to apply these principles to their own work-related writing.

## **E10• Are you staffed for the future? Succession Planning for Municipalities**

Research shows that many successful succession plans have certain elements in common. The plans that truly work include a clear view of an organization's needs and looks at key staff and their expected retirement dates.

Murray Hidlebaugh presented on this topic.

## **E11• HELP International: Tax-Saving Municipal Green Infrastructure**

Rodney Sidloski, the founder of HELP International, filled an entire session with examples of zero-waste community management and forestry programs used to solve municipal waste challenges. Included in the latter category are the use of trees in stream buffers, flood plain filters, effluent irrigation, salinity control around lagoons, and caps for landfills.

Also drawing upon successful sustainability projects in Africa, Rodney offered specific examples from several communities in Saskatchewan which are now engaged in using trees ("phytoremediation") to help clean up soils and water. Also detailed were the types of major cost savings that could be realized from these ecologically sound options compared with more expensive technologies.

## **E12• Community Involvement with In-Motion**

Catherine Kryzanowski, Manager with Sask. InMotion presented on this topic. People's participation in physical activity is influenced by the built, natural and social environments in which they live, learn, work and play.

More than 90 per cent of Saskatch-

ewan children and youth and half of our adult population not meeting Health Canada recommended guidelines for daily physical activity. Local governments have a crucial role to play in creating environments that promote opportunities for physical activity and active living.

This session provided an overview of the evidence on physical activity in community environments and made suggestions on policy and practice based on that evidence.

## **E13• Water and Wastewater Workers Labour Market Analysis Results**

In the summer of 2007, the Saskatchewan Water and Wastewater Association (SWWA) commissioned QED Information Systems Inc. of Regina to undertake a labour market analysis of water and wastewater workers in Saskatchewan.

Doug Elliott with Sask Trends Monitor summarized the results of a survey of 500 water and wastewater workers including the occupation, retirement or career plans, certification level, and wage rates of these workers. As a major stakeholder, the employer can use this information for succession planning and to help reduce staff turnover.

## **E14• Extinguishing the Anguish of Interest Arbitrations**

Laurie-Ann Rusnak, City of Regina and Laurent Mougeot Executive Director of SUMA discussed recent arbitration decisions that have had a significant impact on municipal operating budgets. They discussed the ability of elected officials to get better control over the outcome of interest arbitrations. Also talked about were successful strategies applied in other jurisdictions, and whether municipalities should pursue changes to the current legislative framework.

## **E15• Managing the Boom**

Recent economic conditions are bringing new challenges for urban municipalities. Dale Botting, Deputy Minister Ministry of Enterprise & Innovation discussed the make-up and mandate of Enterprise Saskatchewan and what we what rate of growth we can we anticipate and how it how will this impact Saskatchewan's community.

Ralph Leibel, Director Community Planning, Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Tim Cheesman, Manager Municipal Capacity Development Program and Thomas Williams of Associated Engineering discussed population growth, land development and infrastructure planning, for the future.

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# Eight dialogue sessions with minister's held

*Here are the highlights from some of the dialogue sessions held during the Wednesday morning dialogue sessions:*

**• Dialogue with the Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing, the Honourable Darryl Hickie**

This year's session with the newly appointed Minister of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing brought a packed room of delegates with a plethora of issues they wanted to see discussed with the new Minister Darryl Hickie.

As in past years the issue of policing was on the top of the agenda. Delegates spoke to the ongoing irritant of service levels within detachments. Delegates restated over and over their frustration that they continue to pay the full cost for policing yet their detachments continue to be understaffed and there is no plan in place to fill those vacancies.

In addition, Mayor Sandy Larson (Swift Current) brought forward the issue of the new RCMP radio system, a concern of many municipalities. She is deeply concerned that municipalities have paid into a system that is being developed with little municipal input and may also be used by other users that have put little or no money into the system.

Other items on the agenda included the growing concern of gang activity in smaller urban centres, the continued holdback of fine revenues to municipalities, the desire for the RCMP to enforce municipal bylaws and lastly the need for improved victim services.

The Minister responded by stating that as the new Minister appointed to this portfolio he has worked extremely hard to learn and understand the issues that were brought forward by the delegates. He stated that the ministry is aware of the concerns with the RCMP and that these irritants will be discussed in upcoming talks in the lead up to the renewal of RCMP policing in the province. He added that he is looking forward to working with the municipal sector in addressing these concerns and finding solutions to ensure our communities continue to be safe and secure.

**• Dialogue with the Minister of Highways and Infrastructure, the Honourable Wayne Elhard**

The Honourable Wayne Elhard, Minister of Highways and Infrastructure was on hand to speak to those interested in the new government's plans for highways in the province.

Elhard spoke to addressing issues of concern by evaluating projects

and prioritizing them by criteria. He wants to see an economic analysis of the road system in order for example to bring roads to primary status. A five year rolling plan will be utilized to have the where, how and why's of projects that are to be completed evaluated. The priority will be on quality construction rather than spreading the public money too thinly explaining that the life expectancy should be 10-25 years rather than 7 years or so. There are goals to improve technology by the approach of a transportation center of excellence to create sustainability and environmentally friendly technology and construction.

Delegates brought forward concerns relating to tying highway maintenance/construction to the economy, infrastructure assistance, tendering processes, staffing of maintenance shops and committed monies from the previous government. There was interest on whether there is a future for the area transportation committees and it was recommended that municipalities join and participate in them. The Minister closed saying that he wants to make a difference.

**• Dialogue with Environment Minister, the Honourable Nancy Heppner**

Environment Minister Nancy Heppner and her officials fielded almost 20 questions from delegates, mostly focused on the three areas of long-standing municipal concerns: water and wastewater regulations, solid waste recycling or landfill costs, and contaminated petroleum sites.

There is growing interest in water conservation and self-financing utilities but still concerns with treatment costs and regulations. The municipal horizon is also expanding to encompass regional watershed protection and "ecological" options like using new forests to take up wastewater effluent (as in the HELP International workshop at convention).

Delegates are becoming tired of waiting for movement toward a long-promised Multi-Material Recycling Program (MMRP), as recycling costs continue to outpace any returns on materials collected—especially in smaller communities faced with higher relative transportation costs. Greater "stewardship" has recently been achieved in new areas like waste paint and electronics recycling, and the Minister promised to give higher priority to solving the MMRP challenge.

Municipalities also remain interested in seeing more contaminated petroleum sites reclaimed, perhaps less due to concerns about aquifer threats than as part of local economic development strategies. An earlier grant program was limited to abandoned sites, but some companies are still sitting on potentially valuable property.

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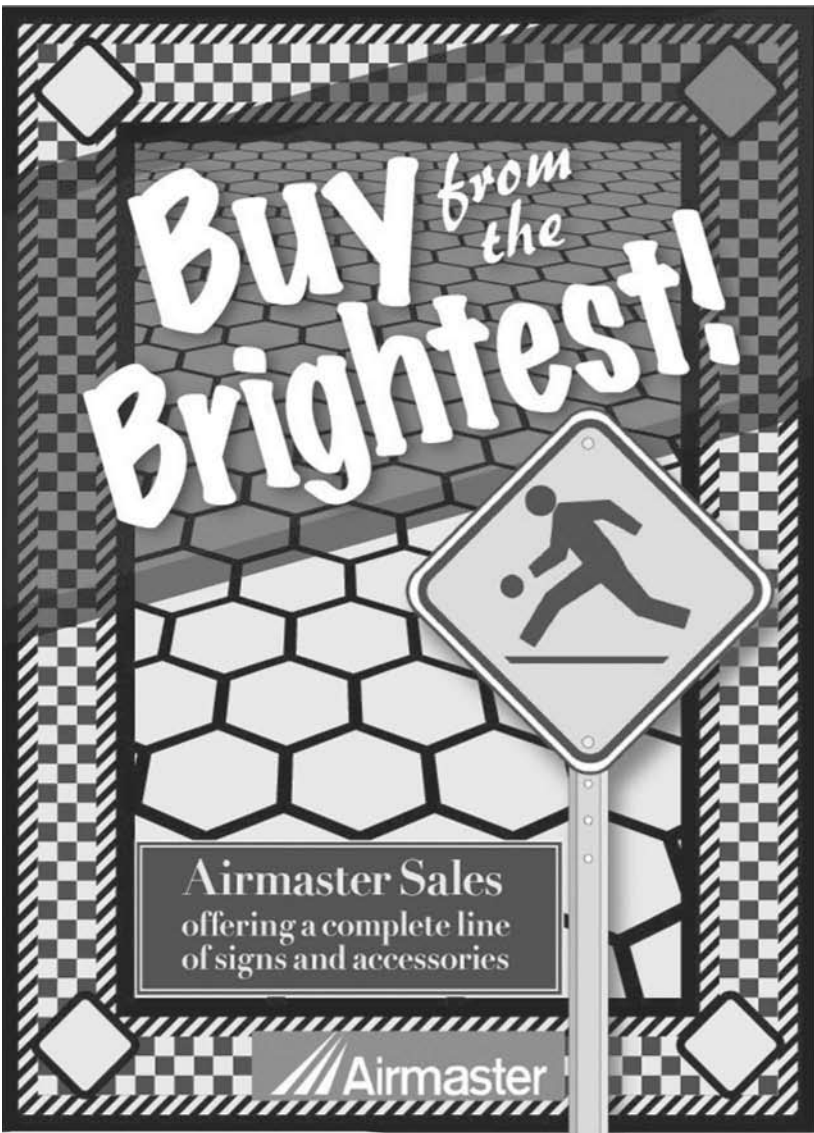
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The Minister said that she was open to new ideas and strategies for dealing with these municipal issues and would ask her officials to pursue them, based on the questions raised in the session.



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# Common themes run through city, town and village sector meetings

## • **City Sector**

The consensus in the city sector session was to continue to build a relationship with new Provincial Government over the coming weeks, educating them about our “desperate” funding needs. Delegates reviewed the Provincial Government’s commitment to a 7% increase this year in Revenue Sharing, which would be appreciated but not the long-term plan long worked toward. Cities reported they still face mill rate increases averaging at least 6% this year.

The sector passed a resolution for SUMA (in the subsequent plenary session) to support creation of a joint task force on Canada’s municipal infrastructure needs, involving all three orders of government, to create a 20-year plan to overcome the infrastructure gap.

The cities are presenting a report to the Provincial Government (after mayors met with Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Bill Boyd at convention) to show some ways to deal with non-discriminatory business licensing and subsidies without including municipalities under sweeping TILMA-like agreements.

The city mayors also met with Environment Minister Nancy Hepner at convention and will continue to work with the Provincial Government to overcome key obstacles in establishing a paper recycling program. The goal is to achieve a stewardship program with industry (consumer) contributions greater than 50% of costs.

The session also revived a resolution from 2006 to request amendments to police and firefighters legislation to provide adequate di-

rection for labour arbitrators to ensure outcomes are consistent with local labour market conditions.

City delegates also reviewed the work undertaken throughout the year, including regional meetings, to cultivate continued unity among the urban sectors. SUMA appreciates the many policy areas in which city staff resources, particularly from Regina and Saskatoon, are offered to help develop positions on matters like TILMA – and the new self-insurance plan for all SUMA members.

## • **Town Sector**

In his first appearance as the chair of the town sector meeting at convention, Vice-President Renaud Bissonnette presented on a wide range of issues that SUMA has and is working on for the town sector.

Delegates were updated on the progress to date on the Municipal Sector Strategic Plan (MSSP). This is the process that SUMA began with the previous government to address the issue of revenue sharing and infrastructure funding. The new Ministry of Municipal Affairs has indicated a willingness to continue this process. SUMA will push to see that a long term predictable revenue sharing and infrastructure funding program is established as an outcome of this process.

Vice-President Bissonnette also spoke to the Building Canada Fund, the Government of Canada’s new infrastructure program. The agreement between the Province of Saskatchewan and the federal government has not been signed yet, SUMA has stated on many occasions that this needs to be completed soon so munici-

palities can begin work on much needed infrastructure.

The Saskatchewan Infrastructure Growth Initiative was also addressed. This is the new \$300 million loan program available through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to assist municipalities in lot development. The Minister of Municipal Affairs spoke to this program during his convention address; however, specific details have yet to be released.

Other topics that were addressed at the meeting included SUMA’s support for the Education Tax Coalition and our involvement over the past year in lobbying against school closures. Local contributions to health facility construction and concerns with the new Public Sector Accounting Board regulations requiring the reporting of tangible capital assets were topics that evoked a lot of discussion among delegates.

Lastly, Mayor Sharon Armstrong (Wynyard) made a presentation on the proposed SUMA by-law changes and provided an update on the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency.

## • **Village Sector**

Vice president Barry Gunther continued to show his mastery of the SUMA’s many portfolios by presenting and answering questions on a host of issues important to villages and resort villages in Saskatchewan.

He updated delegates the progress being made with self insurance and the Municipal Sector Strategic Plan (MSSP). This process is one that SUMA began with the previous government to address the issue of revenue sharing and

infrastructure funding with all of Saskatchewan’s cities, towns and villages. He pointed out that Minister of Municipal Affairs Bill Hutchinson has indicated a willingness to continue this process, but that a seven per cent interim increase in revenue sharing is all that SUMA members will see in 2008.

The Building Canada Fund (the Federal Government’s new infrastructure fund) was discussed with the packed room of delegates. While no agreement has been signed between the Federal and Provincial government’s, Vice-President Gunther said he is hopeful that dollars will flow this year, especially being that many smaller communities are in dire need of infrastructure funding. Mayor Sharon Armstrong (Wynyard) dropped in briefly to discuss updates with the Saskatchewan Assessment Management Agency.

SIGI, or the Saskatchewan Infrastructure Growth Initiative was also addressed. This election promise, \$300 million loan program available through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, is designed to assist communities with municipal lot development. Details are still being ironed out and should be available shortly.

Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) regulations (the reporting of tangible capital) continue to be an issue with smaller communities. Delegates voiced their displeasure with the process and asked that SUMA lean on the Government ease the process. Other topics addressed included SUMA’s support for the Education Tax Coalition and local contributions to health facility construction.

## SCADA Helps SaskWater Improve Services and Reduce Costs

SaskWater launched its new Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) control centre in 2007. The centre uses a SCADA system to remotely monitor 33 of SaskWater’s owned and contracted systems across the province 24 hours per day 365 days per year.

Operating water and wastewater systems for communities in a province the size of Saskatchewan can be challenging. SaskWater serves approximately 45,000 people in 56 communities across a province covering 140,000 square kilometres. Traditionally, SaskWater has had highly developed local monitoring and control systems on its larger regional treatment systems. Maintaining this level of sophistication posed a challenge as SaskWater expanded its service into small and often remote communities.

“The new control centre provides a number of benefits, including the ability to quickly respond to any operational issues that may arise,” says Stuart Kramer, SaskWater President. “Use of SCADA technology helps SaskWater to maintain safe, reliable, quality water services, while reducing consumer risk and lowering operating costs.”

The SCADA system monitors key water quality parameters such as turbidity and chlorine residuals and other operating parameters such as flow, pressure, water levels and status of pumps. Remote facilities are polled for operating conditions every five minutes.

By remotely monitoring SaskWater facilities, cost for travel to sites is reduced and field staff can focus more time on preventative maintenance and facility improvements, providing a higher level of service to customers.

This SCADA system addresses the needs of SaskWater now and in the future, helping to achieve a number of corporate goals including safe potable water monitored 24/7, improved water quality, improved use of staff resources and reduced operating costs. SaskWater is continuing to grow, with an additional five SCADA sites to be added in 2008.

At its new SCADA control centre SaskWater can quickly respond to any operational issues that may arise. The SCADA system is considered one of the most advanced systems in North America.

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