

UrbanVoice

The newsletter of the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association

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Expectations Raised; Expectations Deferred

November was an up-and-down month for SUMA members, as the provincial government's Throne Speech gave some optimism that two key issues, revenue sharing and property tax relief, would be addressed. The speech mentioned both "revenue sharing needs" and "a long term solution to education property tax relief", which SUMA President, Mayor Don Schlosser welcomed.

"We hope that this will set the tone for translating partnership talk into improved provincial programs," Schlosser said in a news release issued that day.

However, the optimism turned to disappointment just over a week later, as the province's mid-year financial update revealed a whopping surplus for 2005-2006, which was directed primarily (86 per cent) toward specific one-time items.

The financial update was released November 16, the same day

SUMA's Executive Committee was holding its regular meeting. In a news release issued that day SUMA repeated its message that it had requested an additional \$10 million in Revenue Sharing funding for urban municipalities at the mid-year review, with a request for another \$10 million in the 2006 Budget. The total requested increase of \$20 million would help replace the cutbacks to Revenue Sharing funding that occurred in the 1990s.

"SUMA has been working in good faith for months as a partner with the province to identify the needs of urban municipalities that could be met with increased revenue sharing," said Schlosser, referring to the committee established by Government Relations to examine municipal needs. "We believe we have identified there is a compelling need to provide more unconditional funding that would allow each municipality to

address its specific priorities. Our patience is wearing thin."

President Schlosser also drew a parallel between the situation facing urban municipalities and the provincial government and the province's Raise A Flag campaign for a Saskatchewan Energy Accord with the federal government. (Note: Raise A Flag has been put on hold for the duration of the federal election campaign).

"The provincial government is asking Saskatchewan citizens to support what it sees as unfair treatment under the federal government's equalization formula," Schlosser noted. "SUMA has made a similar argument with the provincial government, because just as a strong Saskatchewan contributes to a strong Canada, so strong cities, towns and villages contribute to a strong Saskatchewan."

Board Briefs

During the SUMA Board meeting on December 9th and 10th the Board passed motions regarding inequities in the Energy Share program, and a proposed fee increase intended to increase SUMA's capacity to address important policy issues.

SUMA Supports Extension of Energy Share Program

The SUMA Board of Directors approved a recommendation from the Executive Committee to ask the provincial government to extend the Energy Share program to non-SaskEnergy natural gas customers. Many SUMA members have entered into term contracts with companies like CEG Energy Options to lock in rates lower than those set by SaskEnergy. These contracts cover gas supplies to municipal facilities, including recreational arenas and ice rinks.

The Energy Share subsidy program, which runs from November 2005 through March 2006, applies only to SaskEnergy customers, although it was presented as a program to provide a benefit to Saskatchewan residents from higher-than-

New Deal Update

At the Municipal Forum held December 8th, Government Relations officials reported that the New Deal Secretariat had received 42 infrastructure investment plans under the program, which is being administered by GR. The department has received the first annual funding installment from the federal government – \$17.7 million.

Need Help Completing Your Plan? Check the Web

SUMA and SARM both pledged their support to facilitate the processing of the investment plans, since municipal and provincial administrators are working their way up a learning curve with the new program. A good place to start looking for information and help in completing infrastructure investment plans is the New Deal Secretariat section of the Government Relations website at <http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mrd/ndindex.shtml>

anticipated revenues from the province's oil and gas resources. In effect, Energy Share withholds benefits from those customers who have taken steps to manage and reduce costs.

CEG Energy Options had threatened to pull out of the province over Energy Share, but the province recently assured CEG that this "one-time" program will not be extended.

Revenue Sharing Revival

The SUMA Board decided to stand firm on the request for at least a \$30 million increase in Revenue Sharing in the spring Provincial budget, since

municipalities did not see their \$10 million minimum expectation for a mid-year adjustment realized in November. The other disappointment discussed at length by the Board was the inability of the Municipal Forum's Revenue Sharing Review process to make much progress toward a longer-term funding plan, including escalator formula, as called for in last year's Annual Convention resolution. Another strongly worded resolution will be highlighted at this year's convention, but a more immediate letter will be sent to Cabinet to confirm SUMA expectations.

Inside this issue

President Don Schlosser writes about SUMA's continuing campaign for additional unconditional funding from the provincial government to urban municipalities through Revenue Sharing. He also has a few words about the good work being done by the Coalition for Education Tax Reduction, of which SUMA is a partner.

The 2006 Convention is getting closer, and this issue of Urban Voice contains a lot of useful information that will help you plan how to get the most out of this important annual event. If the trade show portion of Convention has always been a "must see" for you, you're in for a big, pleasant surprise. With additional facilities now available at Regina Exhibition Park, this edition of the trade show will be bigger and better than ever.

Executive Director Laurent Mougeot offers his thoughts and observations on the importance of keeping the urban agenda in front of federal candidates and the public during the current election campaign. He also has some thoughts about the benefits of attending the upcoming Convention 2006.

This issue also contains articles about some interesting and innovative regionally-oriented development initiatives taking place in different areas of the province. This issue also has an article about the stuff of life: water, and excerpts from the recent Senate interim report about the state of water resources and research in western Canada. Some of the report's findings are disturbing, and suggest that water will be near the top of every municipal council's priority list for years to come.

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SUMA has a new address!

SUMA's offices are now located at:
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President's Message

As Saskatchewan's cities, towns and villages prepare to enter a second century the age-old issue of funding continues to be front-and-centre. Having just come from a Municipal Forum meeting (December 8) with Government Relations Minister Len Taylor, I can tell you that more work needs to be done on Revenue Sharing. While the report from the Committee on Revenue Sharing, which combined the work of four sub-committees, did contain some good things, there are still some gaps that need to be filled and further questions that need to be answered.

The committee has determined that urban and rural municipalities face an infrastructure gap estimated at \$1.1 billion, which government officials did not dispute. The report also stated that, in general, municipal revenues are keeping pace with expenditures, except for our two biggest cities. However, as Vice President Barry Gunther noted, in many cases municipalities are operating like the family with a 15-year old car: It's still working, but the operating costs are going up, and when something breaks, there may not be the money to fix it.

For all the progress the Committee has made in gathering information, two key components were missing: a long-term plan and a workable formula for Revenue Sharing. Minister Taylor will be taking our request for additional funding to Treasury Board in the next few weeks with the expectation that the program will continue in its current form in 2006. I anticipate more work will take place in 2006 to develop a long-term plan - and perhaps a workable formula? - in time for the 2007-2008 budget cycle. In the meantime, since no additional funding was included in the province's 2005 mid-term review, SUMA's request has risen to an additional \$30 million for urban municipalities in the 2006-2007 budget.

Minister Taylor also provided a bit more information about the Building Communities Fund announced in the Throne Speech. It will be an infrastructure funding program, serving in part to fill some of the gaps that are now apparent from the experience of previous programs such as the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund. The Minister said there will be consultations with municipalities to put some flesh on the bones of the Building Communities Fund. However, he

could not answer the big question: How much money will be in the Fund? Minister Taylor did assure us that whatever the dollar amount, it will be new funding.

On another topic, SUMA staff members have settled into our bright, attractive new office space at 2222 Thirteenth Avenue in Regina. If you have the opportunity, drop in and say "Hello" to the folks who keep our organization functioning on a day-to-day basis. In particular, give a welcome to our Executive Director, Laurent Mougeot, who has been on a steep learning curve the past few months after taking over the reins from our long-term ED, Keith Schneider.

Finally, it is my pleasure to wish you all the best for the Christmas season and for a healthy and happy 2006. As a final note, I encourage all of you to make Convention 2006 one of the "must-do" events on your calendars. We have put together an informative and exciting program designed to equip our members for the challenges ahead, along with some opportunities to have some fun together. See you at Convention, February 5th to 8th!

Best wishes for the season



May you experience the joys of the holiday season throughout the coming year!

Season's Greetings from Saskatchewan Government Relations



Executive Director

As I write this we find ourselves in an uncommon winter election campaign. Predictably, the issues that have dominated the early part of the campaign have been taxes, health care, child care and the like. I believe it is important for us who work in the municipal sector to keep in mind the progress made in recent years by SUMA and FCM to encourage the federal and provincial governments to provide municipalities with new funding streams. I also believe it is incumbent on us to remind the candidates seeking support that there is still much work to be done and more funding needed to address the gaps that still exist in our communities. All of us must be vigilant to ensure that we continue to seek out and secure support for the urban agenda, and that it remains on the radar screens of our local candidates and the national parties. For example, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is urging the party leaders to commit to erase the \$60 billion infrastructure deficit facing Canada's municipalities. I refer you to the FCM website - <http://www.fcm.ca/english/> - for more information. By the way, in its recent report the province's working committee on Revenue Sharing has estimated the infrastructure deficit in our province at \$1.1 billion, based on MRIF and CSIP applications. Since this is an obvious under-estimation of our infrastructure needs, more funding commitments are needed from

the provincial and federal governments to close the gap. Be prepared to ask candidates tough questions on our urban agenda, such as, "What is your Party prepared to do to support the renewal of our municipalities?" Watch the FCM site for updates.

I am also writing this as your Board of Directors completes another quarterly meeting. During the meeting the Board reaffirmed its position that Revenue Sharing remains the Association's top priority issue with the provincial government. The Board also adopted several recommendations made by the administration to address a budget shortfall for 2006 and to assist with cost containment in future years. The Board also made decisions on proposed fee increases, and this will soon be communicated to member municipalities with detailed information on our operations.

Convention 2006 is fast approaching. The convention planning committee of the Board of Directors and SUMA staff have been planning the event for months and are now heavily involved in implementing the myriad details that will make for a successful and enjoyable convention experience. By now you should have received a brochure with a preliminary convention agenda and registration information. Information and registration forms are also available at the SUMA website - <http://www.suma.org/index.php>



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Mayor Allan Earle, Vice-President, Towns
Mayor Barry Gunther, Vice-President, Villages, Resort Villages and Northern Municipalities

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Staff Writers ... Mervyn Norton, Cam Baker

Our Members Write

Members Support SUMA's Request for Revenue Sharing

The following excerpts are taken from letters and resolutions from various urban municipalities and directed to Government Relations Minister Len Taylor and other provincial government representatives. These letters support SUMA's request for additional Revenue Sharing funding from the province. Since no additional funding was provided at the province's mid-year financial review, SUMA's request is that the initial \$10 million request for 2005 be included with an additional \$20 million in the 2006 Budget for a total increase of \$30 million.

To Premier Lorne Calvert, October 26, 2005:

Rural Saskatchewan is where natural resources are located and wealth is created. Municipalities need sufficient and predictable revenue sharing funds from senior governments, who are the beneficiaries of this wealth through a variety of revenue sources. – Town of Hudson Bay

To Hon. Harry Van Mulligan, Minister of Finance, November 10, 2005:

It is time for the Provincial Government to step up to the plate and deliver to urban municipal government a true form of Provincial/Municipal co-operation and increase the revenue sharing pool in 2006 by a minimum of \$10 million. – Town of Carnduff

Resolution supporting SUMA's request for additional Revenue Sharing, November 8, 2005:

The infrastructure deficit in Saskatchewan municipalities is growing, and only through appropriate levels of revenue sharing can the province continue to move forward and remain competitive in the global marketplace. – Town of Maple Creek

To Government Relations Minister Len Taylor, November 22, 2005:

We as a small village find it hard to finance a large project so that we are able to take advantage of the infrastructure grants now made available. – Village of Carievale

To Premier Lorne Calvert, November 8, 2005:

All other costs have far outstripped the revenue sharing pool. If the original formula were to be used, the Town of Rosetown's revenue sharing should be triple what it is today. – Town of Rosetown

To Hon. Len Taylor, Minister of Government Relations, November 15, 2005:

Council strongly believes increasing the revenue sharing grant will allow us the independence to keep our community strong and viable.

* * * * *

If we want to retain our families and encourage our young people to remain at home, we need to be able to offer them what they need to remain here. – Town of Radville

To Government Relations Minister Len Taylor, October 26, 2005:

It is the belief of City Council that a true sharing of revenue based on a formula resulting from the indices of personal, corporate, fuel and retail sales would benefit both Provincial and Municipal governments. Positive steps in this direction would also exemplify movement towards a true urban agenda in our Province. – City of Humboldt

Toye Receives Centennial Leadership Award

Jim Toye, Past President of the Urban Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan, has received a Saskatchewan Centennial Leadership Award for his volunteer role in providing significant organizational leadership to the success and development of UMAAS. The presentation was made by MLA Doreen Hamilton.

Toye has held a series of Executive positions since 1995, and has served as Past President since June 2000. In addition, Toye has served on numerous committees on behalf of the Executive Board, and has been an active member of a multitude of volunteer organizations in the communities where he has worked.

Grants for Green Infrastructure

Since 1994 more than 335 communities across Canada have participated in Green Streets Canada's program to encourage innovative practices and policies in urban forest management. More than \$2 million has been committed under the program. Currently, the program is asking for proposals from municipalities and First Nations communities for innovative urban forest planning, single tree and stand demonstration products, innovative policy, best management practices, workshops, outreach and education, innovative tools, or projects which feature urban forests as part of "green infrastructure". Information and applications can be found at the Tree Canada website, www.tcf-fca.ca. The deadline for applications is January 20, 2006.

Our Survey Said...

When you visit SUMA's web site, you'll see a quick, multiple choice poll on the right-hand side of your screen. In a recent poll, the question was, "What is your community doing with the Gas Tax (New Deal) money?"

At last count, 103 members had responded. Here are the totally unscientific results so far:

Fix some roads	41 (39.8%)
Fix some pipes	11 (10.7%)
Build a bridge	4 (3.9%)
Revamp our landfill strategy	9 (8.7%)
Energy efficient retrofits	10 (9.7%)
Nothing...yet	28 (27.1%)

Watch for new polls posted to the SUMA website, www.suma.org. Let us know what you think!

Kovach New FCM President



Councillor Gloria Kovach from Guelph, Ontario is the new President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Kovach had been First Vice-President of the organization. She succeeds the Mayor of Duncan, B.C., Michael Coleman as President.

Kovach began her term as President with a familiar refrain – a call to all federal political parties to support a long-term commitment and plan to erase Canada's municipal infrastructure deficit.

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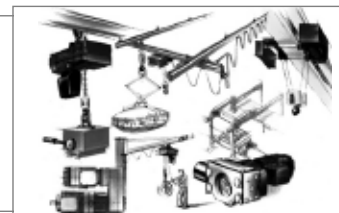


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SUMA, SARM and the U of R Partner to Explore Saskatchewan's Nuclear Future

Along with oil, gas, potash, diamonds and 45 per cent of the arable land in Canada, Saskatchewan has been blessed with the richest uranium deposits in the world. It's true that Saskatchewan has been using our vast resources for decades, but the discussion of what we have been doing – and not doing – with those reserves has been gaining increasing attention of late. Many have been asking why there isn't more value added to our uranium prior to being shipped beyond our borders. SUMA, along with SARM and the University of Regina, will attempt to answer that and other questions at the "Exploring Saskatchewan's Nuclear Future" conference January 16th to 18th in Regina.

"SUMA and SARM have an interest in economic development



SUMA policy analyst Cam Baker and SARM Assistant Executive Director Dale Harvey in front of the MacLean Lake open-pit uranium mine during a tour in late November. Photo courtesy Dale Harvey.

in Saskatchewan," said SUMA President Don Schlosser at the November 23 press conference. "We want to see, through an informed and open public discussion, if an expansion of the nuclear industry is a safe and viable option to create jobs in our communities."

Highlighting the conference will be Kjell Andersson from Karita Research in Sweden. Andersson will be discussing the Swedish experience, where that nation has, after extensive public discussion, decided to enter into a research project that would determine a safe and effective way to dispose of spent nuclear fuel. Patrick Moore, a co-founder of Greenpeace and former President of Greenpeace Canada, will provide a luncheon discussion on nuclear power and its role in greenhouse gas reduction.

"This conference will look at all aspects of the nuclear energy industry, from mining and processing to power generation and disposal," said SARM President Neal Hardy. "There are many different perspectives on the issue, and we want to explore what is best for all the people of Saskatchewan."

Other speakers include Don Ching, President of Cogema; Cameco President Jerry Grandy;

Rick Kusmerski from JNR resources; SaskPower VP Rick Patrick; Eddy Isaacs from the Alberta Energy Research Institute, the University of Regina's Malcolm Wilson, plus speakers from the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission and the Nuclear Waste Management Organization. The organizing committee is also seeking panel representatives from the North to contribute the perspective of those living closest to the uranium industry.

Each informative session will present three to four speakers, followed by a panel discussion, with opportunities for questions from the floor. The intent of the Conference Organizing Committee is to facilitate an open, frank and orderly discussion on what has historically been a highly divisive issue in Saskatchewan.

The conference has been gaining significant attention with the public, including praise in the Saskatchewan Legislature on November 30th. Industry and



A view of the MacLean Lake mine. Photo courtesy Regina City Councillor Bill Grey.

Resources Minister Eric Cline said, "I applaud and our Government applauds SUMA, SARM, and the U of R having a public discussion about the issue of nuclear energy in our province." Saskatchewan Party leader Brad Wall added: "Mr. Speaker, the Saskatchewan Party couldn't agree more, and we applaud the efforts of SUMA, SARM and the University of Regina."

There has been considerable space reserved at the Regina Inn for a conference of this magnitude, but registrations are filling up quickly. Book before January 2nd to take advantage of the special early bird rate of \$150 per participant. For registration and more conference information, go to www.sasknuclearfuture.ca.

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Researching a Saskatchewan-Made Water Treatment System

The quality of drinking water provided in small, isolated communities has been in the national spotlight recently, and has certainly become an urgent issue for many Saskatchewan communities. A research project currently underway may provide an answer for small communities searching for potable water from a source that is economically viable and user friendly.

The research project is being led by Dr. Dena McMartin, a professor of engineering at the University of Regina. She began the project at the suggestion of Dean of the Faculty of Engineering. She applied for and received funding for a lab to research the process from Western Economic Diversification. Operational funding to field-test in two communities comes from Communities of Tomorrow, with in-kind support from the U of R and Environment Canada.

Communities of Tomorrow is a partnership established to create a centre of excellence in research, innovation and commercialization for sustainable communities. Since it was created Communities of Tomorrow has received about 70 research proposals, and has invested in about 15 projects.

"The outcome of the research can be the creation of new technology or the demonstration of innovative ideas," explains COT Executive Director Anne Parker. "It could also be the development of a best practice. In the case of the potable water project, it is attempting to address a need in an innovative way."

Working with Health Canada, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Agriculture Canada, McMartin and a group of graduate students have identified two First Nation communities for field testing. These were chosen because, as McMartin says, First Nations have even more challenging water quality problems than the rest of rural Saskatchewan. However, she adds, if the research results in a practical water treatment system, the findings will also apply to other small communities, including resort communities.

McMartin and her team of grad students have collected the required water quality data, and have been

building relationships in the two communities, which have not given permission to be identified. Suppliers of treated water do not deliver to either community, which means the community or individual residents must travel into Regina or Saskatoon to buy water, adding significantly to its cost.

"I had hoped to use reverse osmosis systems on the taps in homes that require potable water – which Saskatchewan Environment allows – as a comparison to full-scale treatment systems. However, Health Canada

does not allow this approach," McMartin explains. "So, we will build a lab-scale process system on campus. By late summer 2006 I hope we will be able to set up systems on-site and see how they run.

"Building a system for a cluster of five or ten homes is economically and technically challenging," she adds. "It's much easier to scale up a water treatment system than to scale it down. I see house-by-house systems as the way to go in rural Saskatchewan, if this system works."

McMartin says she expects some seasonal variability in water quality, and she anticipates doing "a lot of tweaking" in the lab and on site as the project progresses. As an additional benefit, the First Nations grad student involved in the project is excited about being a role model for the communities. He hopes the project will inspire more First Nations youth to consider post-secondary education as an option.

Another Perspective on Water

The following passage is taken from the recently released interim report of the Senate Committee examining water resources in Western Canada, titled "Water in Western Canada: Under Pressure." While the report points to growing competition for increasingly variable water supplies caused by the effects of climate change, the report also notes there is a serious lack of information about our water resources.

"The cost of not responding to emerging water challenges would likely dwarf the cost of addressing them, and failure to respond will jeopardize life as we know it, particularly in Alberta and other prairie provinces.

In seeking to shed light on this important issue, the Committee came to the shocking realization that very little is currently known about Canada's water resources.

Throughout our study we asked questions such as: Are our aquifers being depleted? Is the quality of our water adequately protected? Are we using the resource in a sustainable fashion? Too often the answer was, "we just don't know."

Witnesses who appeared before the Committee were remarkably candid. Time and again we heard this message from the scientific community: "we are simply not doing enough or collecting enough information to allow us to manage water better. Many people are doing the best they can with the information that they have. However, that information is incomplete...we could do a much better job of managing the resource."

Later in the interim report the Committee makes six recommendations, including that the federal government resume taking an active role in water research and water management issues, a role it backed away from over the past 15 years. The following is a preamble to a recommendation that the federal government form a National Water Council, which would include participation from all orders of government.

"Nineteen federal departments share the approximately \$750 million a year that the Government of Canada spends on activities directly or indirectly connected with water. Your Committee heard evidence suggesting that their activities are generally uncoordinated, and that cooperation across these departments is still in its infancy, owing in part to the silo mentality that is unfortunately still prevalent in federal departments.

In 2004, the Interdepartmental Assistant Deputy Ministers' Water Committee unveiled a Federal Water Framework aimed at improving interdepartmental cooperation. Richard Arseneault, a principal in the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, told the Committee that to date this Water Framework "is going nowhere. They spent money, time and effort on producing something that is a good first step in terms of where the federal government is going with water issues, but it is now becoming stagnant."

Despite this setback, communication between departments is ongoing and some progress has been made in moving forward with a federal water

research agenda. Individual departments, however, continue to be wary of programs managed jointly with other departments due to financial management and accountability issues.

The resulting continued lack of focus on water issues is lamentable. It is high time for the Government of Canada to provide leadership and focus, in a coordinated fashion, on what matters most. Water matters.

The task of renewing the federal government's approach to water is a critical one. The time has come to embrace a truly co-operative, national approach that transcends interdepartmental squabbles and interjurisdictional boundaries.

Recommendation 5

The Government of Canada should create a National Water Council. This Council, composed of representatives from industry, research institutes and all orders of government, would be tasked with identifying the key water issues that require attention from the federal government and proposing strategies for addressing them."

What do you think? Would municipalities benefit from the proposed National Water Council? Is such an organization the answer to the challenges facing municipalities on water issues? If you have some thoughts to share with your fellow SUMA members, send a note to barmstrong@suma.org, for inclusion in the next issue of Urban Voice.

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UMAAS UPDATE

by R.K. (Kim) Hauta, RMA, Division #4 Director

In 1998 the Urban Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan (UMAAS) drafted and implemented a five-year Strategic Plan to outline what the organization wanted to accomplish in a number of key identified areas. The Plan was developed with the assistance of Peter Krebs from Prudhomme, and upon its expiration in 2003 most of the goals had been achieved.

Therefore, in early 2005 it was decided by the members of the present UMAAS Executive Board to initiate the development of a further five-year Strategic Plan for the period 2005 – 2010. The purpose was to ensure that the future direction and strategy for the UMAAS organization was moving in a positive and forward-thinking manner to maintain a strong, professional organization

for its members. Peter Krebs was once again asked to assist UMAAS in the development of this new Strategic Plan.

The process began with telephone consultations with UMAAS Executive Board members, followed by a planning discussion which identified six Program Areas, the creation of Strategic Goals in each Program Area and the creation of a Mission Statement. A presentation on the cornerstones of the Strategic Plan was made at the June, 2005 UMAAS Convention. In September 2005 the UMAAS Executive Board met to draft the Strategic Plan Objectives that outline what the organization wants to accomplish within each of the Goals in each Program Area. From there an Action Plan will be designed for each Objective.

The Mission Statement developed reads as follows:

“UMAAS is a professional organization of Saskatchewan municipal administrators which assists members in maintaining the highest possible standards of municipal administration for local governance by providing professional development and promoting opportunities for advanced education.”

The six Program Areas identified were:

- 1) Education – Which includes training objectives for the new Municipal Act, bringing the Local Governance Leadership Program to its members and using various opportunities to encourage municipal employees to recognize the benefits of continuing education for administrators.
- 2) Compensation – Development of a compensation guideline comparable to other professional organizations.

3) Membership and Support Services – Maintain a strong membership base.

4) Promotion – Work towards ensuring that the position of administrator is recognized as an essential component of municipal governance.

5) Liaison – Strengthen relationships with all levels of government and fraternal organizations.

6) Officers – Work on divisional meetings and encouraging members to run for the UMAAS Executive Board.

The UMAAS Executive Board will now attempt to complete Action Plans for each of these Objectives and will strive to again meet the identified Goals within the time frames decided upon. From my perspective, I feel that this has been a positive exercise for the UMAAS organization and will definitely help strengthen and make for a professional and rewarding career for many years to come.

Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers: WE NEED YOUR HELP; NOT YOUR NAME

The Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers website – www.saskcrimestoppers.com – makes it easy to “get the word out” if there is a crime committed in your community. To report a crime, simply go to the website and click on “email” at the bottom of any page, and submit to the Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers office any incidents where a crime has been committed. The information will be posted on the web for anyone to view. This is a free service for all urban municipalities in Saskatchewan. Of course, you can also submit an anonymous tip online at the same website if your anonymity is an issue.

Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers and the respective Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachments are asking for information concerning the following crimes:

Farmer's Dog Shot

Rosetown RCMP are seeking the public's assistance or information regarding an incident where a farmer's dog was shot and killed near a yard 13 miles northwest of Rosetown. It is believed the Black Lab was shot with a high-powered rifle sometime Monday, November 7th, 2005.

Stolen Flatbed Trailer

Between November 20th and November 21st a red Trailtech tandem-axle flatdeck trailer left unattended was stolen. The trailer – with “Flaman” on its side – was in a field approximately 1/4 mile east of Elstow on the north side of Highway 16. The culprit(s) needed a 2 5/16” hitch to “pull off” this heist.

If you have information on any of these crimes, call Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers. You do not have to give your name, and calls are not recorded or traced.

Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers does not subscribe to call display. You could earn a cash reward of up to \$2,000 if your information solves a crime.

Call 1-800-222-TIPS (8477). You can access Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers on your SaskTel Mobility cell phone at *TIPS (*8477). You can also submit a tip online at www.saskcrimestoppers.com

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Do YOUR part to make our communities safe!



Regional Projects Trying New Ideas, New Approaches

Communities in some areas of our province are looking at the problems they face through a larger, more regional, lens than they have in the past. In some cases, necessity is the mother of invention, as individual communities simply do not have the capacity to address the big issues they face. The two regional initiatives profiled below are in their early stages, but they highlight some of the ideas being tested to ensure Saskatchewan's smaller urban communities have a future.

Water Wolf

The Water Wolf project encompasses several ambitious initiatives intended to spur non-agricultural economic development in the South Saskatchewan River Valley region. The main impetus is coming from the Mid-Sask Regional Economic Development Authority and Community Futures Development Corporation, which share office space in Outlook.

"We have a joint office and a joint Board," explains Russ McPherson, who is project manager for the Waterwolf project. "Some Board members vote on CF issues, some on REDA issues, and some on both. Many Board members are also municipal councillors, which gives the project a head start, because they have the networks to disseminate information and bring ideas to the table." The regional approach is also receiving support from Western Economic Diversification, Saskatchewan Rural Development and an interdisciplinary team of federal and provincial staff. The round table is being developed in partnership with the Regional Development Institute at the University of Brandon, which is interested in the potential to repeat the process with other regional groups.

Water Wolf was established to address the need for a structure to

manage regional development and planning issues. There was a lack of capacity to do that kind of work, McPherson says. "There was no consensus for planning infrastructure and development, and no regional table to facilitate and encourage initiatives, among other things lacking."

Building on the success of earlier regional projects such as the conversion of the union hospital in Central Butte to a personal care home, Water Wolf was established to create a framework for regional development. One current initiative involves several local and regional organizations that have developed an agreement with Saskatchewan Highways to upgrade Highway 219 between Saskatoon and Lake Diefenbaker.

"The highway will be widened and capped, and it will be permanently weight-restricted for use by commuter and recreational traffic. All of the partners, including the Whitecap First Nation, which is developing a casino and golf course, will cost-share in the project," says McPherson. That project is awaiting budget approval from the province.

Other objectives include using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) as a catalyst for regional planning, facilitating a regional water technician to meet the needs of smaller municipalities and finding a mechanism to address the lack of human and fiscal capacity in the municipalities.

"I see us using GIS for informed decision-making in our planning. The round table and GIS planning tool are key first steps toward a regional planning process," McPherson says.

Once those steps are in place, the Water Wolf project also envisions the creation of a river valley authority, establishment of a tax and infrastructure agreement among municipalities to

accelerate development opportunities and creation of a business plan for infrastructure and residential development in the Danielson Park area.

Action Southwest

In early November, 2005 the Action Southwest Business Networks Coalition (ASBNC) celebrated the completion of the first phase of an initiative to build a stronger, more regionally-based economy in southwest Saskatchewan. SUMA President Don Schlosser was among those attending the "Determining Our Destiny" event in Shaunavon, which drew municipal leaders, business owners, business development organizations, government representatives, financial organizations and educational institutions from across the region.

The initiative began with three information sessions held about a year ago. About 120 stakeholders then formed into four committees that examined the region's prospects in four areas: energy, manufacturing, agribusiness and tourism. The committees looked at the challenges and opportunities facing their industries, and then developed strategies and action plans to begin addressing these issues. This process resulted in the development of over 30 industry-developed initiatives.

"In addition, a competitive advantage analysis was conducted of all sectors in the region to identify which sectors were leading or lagging," says Sandra Blyth, who is managing the initiative. "All of the research and information gathered over the year has now been compiled into a final report that was released at the event – the Engaging Industry Innovation Report. The event also drew on other regional and provincial strategies such as the Action Committee on the Rural Economy, Clearing the Path and Action Saskatchewan."

Phase Two, Blyth adds, will take four of the 30 projects and move them into action mode. The projects include an Energy Safety and Awareness initiative funded by participants from the energy sector. This project will address the main challenge facing the industry in the region – chronic labour shortages. The project will involve presentations to the region's high school students and provide information about career opportunities in the energy sector and safety messages. Another project involves a tourism-oriented map highlighting the top 100 attractions and experiences in the southwest region. A third project will bring together manufacturers in January 2006 to discuss forming a lean manufacturing consortium. Lastly, a proposal to establish a supply chain network in the agriculture industry is awaiting funding approval.

"As part of our celebration event we also launched the Action Southwest Fund, which will help us get some projects off the ground," says Blyth. "In some cases, funding may come from the New Deal money that municipalities will receive. Funding for economic development projects often require matching dollars, which are sometimes difficult to obtain. There is now an emphasis on communities themselves taking a strong leadership role in funding economic development," Blyth continues. "By investing in ourselves, we create confidence in our ability to succeed as a region. If economic development is to be sustainable, we need the commitment of our region, in addition to the government. These projects will serve as a rallying cry for continued collaboration. People in the southwest are really starting to 'think regionally', beyond their borders, and I think this will be the foundation of our future success."

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SUMA's annual Convention is the largest, and in many ways, the most important event hosted by the association each year. Convention allows members to get together with their colleagues to discuss and make decisions affecting the direction of the association, to meet with provincial government Ministers and representatives, and to have some fun.

This year, as SUMA begins a second century of serving Saskatchewan's cities, towns and villages, the convention theme is Dawning of a New Direction. Convention 2006 will provide you with information about best practices, new technologies and new concepts for your consideration. You will be challenged to explore new approaches to providing leadership in your communities.

With the exception of the Hospitality Night at the Regina Inn, hosted by the SUMA Board of Directors on Monday evening, all events will be at the Queensbury Convention Centre. For a detailed agenda and to register, consult the Convention 2006 brochure sent to you by mail, call 306-525-3727 or go to www.suma.org and click on "2006" under the "Convention" menu item.

Pre-Convention Workshop

On Sunday, February 5 SUMA and the City of Regina will co-host "Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Government", a workshop developed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. This workshop will go beyond identifying barriers to women's participation in municipal

DAWNING OF A NEW DIRECTION

SUMA CONVENTION 2006

Workshops, Education Sessions, Information Sessions, Forums, Tradeshow, Awards, Socializing and Entertainment: All part of Convention 2006

government to identifying strategies that will be used in establishing a National Strategic Action Plan that will be presented at the FCM Board meeting in June, 2006. In addition, prominent Saskatchewan women politicians have been invited to share their experiences. February 5, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Sunday Education Sessions

Sunday afternoon features eight education sessions in two 90-minute time blocks. From 1:15 to 2:45 choose from:

- New Directions in Local Policing
- New Directions in Energy Conservation
- New Directions in Purchasing Practices
- New Directions in Tourism

From 3:00 to 4:30 choose from four additional important topics:

- New Directions in Disaster Planning
- New Directions in Municipal Software
- New Directions in Recycling in Waste Management
- New Directions in Water Technology

Convention Forums

Convention 2006 offers information and thought-provoking forums on two topics that are vital to your communities. Come and participate in these two sessions on Tuesday, February 7.

New Directions in Community Development – 8:30 - 10:00 am

Sustainability is a key word these days; it shows up often as a criterion for federal and provincial funding. More and more it's evident that regional cooperation is a prime strategy in remaining sustainable, and that sharing services within a region will play a major role. What strategies will encourage economic development in your community and region? What role can immigration play in increasing your population and workforce? This session will cover these issues, and more.

New Directions in Leadership – 1:30 - 3:00 pm

Bob Linner, City Manager for the City of Regina, and Bruce Davidson of Concerned Walkerton Citizens will give their perspectives on leadership.

You are leaders in your communities. What are the qualities that make a great municipal leader? Are there new directions you could be taking? Are there best practices you are not aware of that could be helpful to your community? Whether you are an elected official or senior administrator, perceptions among the public and accountabilities have changed over the past few years, and will likely continue to do so.

This session will also look at changes in responsibilities involved in implementing a professional water management team. Bruce Davidson of Concerned Walkerton Citizens will challenge you to change your perception of what is needed to manage a safe water system.

Monday, February 6 Highlights

9:30 - 10:30 am: Keynote Address
11:20 - Noon: Premier's Address
1:30 - 2:00 pm: Report of the Task Force on Regional Waste Recycling
2:00 - 2:30: Report of the Task Force on Self Insurance
4:00 - 5:30: Sector meetings and Northern Regional meeting

Tuesday, February 7 Highlights

8:30 - 10:00 am: Forum: New Directions in Community Development
10:30 - 10:50: Address by Hon. Len Taylor, Minister of Government Relations
11:00 - Noon: Resolutions, Part 1
1:30 - 3:00 pm: Forum: New Directions in Leadership
3:15 - 4:30: Resolutions, Part 2

Weds, February 8 Highlights

9:00 - 10:15 am: Dialogue with Ministers
10:30 - Noon: Bear Pit with Cabinet
Adjourn

Gospel Hour

Start your Sunday at Convention with an hour of gospel singing and fellowship – Noon to 1:00 pm

Social Activities

Sunday, February 5 – 8:00 pm
Mardi Gras and Casino Night

Monday, February 6 – 8:00 pm
SUMA Board of Directors Hospitality Night

Tuesday, February 7 – 7:00 pm
President's Banquet and Awards Ceremony

Partner's Program

During Convention partners can enjoy historical tours, a trip to a spa and sample some of Regina's culinary delights. The program begins Monday morning with a champagne breakfast and guest speaker, followed by a tour of the City of Moose Jaw and lunch at the mineral spa. After lunch you can stay at the spa or take of tour of the famous Tunnels, or the Western Development Museum.

Back by popular demand on Tuesday are tours to the Arm River Hutterite Colony, the Saskatchewan Legislative Building and Government House, or visit Notre Dame College at Wilcox. The program ends with fine dining at a Regina Restaurant.

Municipal Leadership Development Program

The Winter 2006 modules in the Municipal Leadership Development Program have been scheduled and registrations are now being accepted. Following are the new dates and locations:

January

Tuesday, January 24 – Module 2 – Planning For Success – Broadview

Tuesday, January 24 – Module 3 – Municipal Economic Development Fundamentals – Kindersley

Wednesday, January 25 – Module 4 – Human Resources in the Municipal Workplace – Wilkie

Wednesday, January 25 – Module 5 – Public Relations and Communications for Municipalities – Moose Jaw

Tuesday, January 31 – Module 2 – Planning for Success – Lafleche

February

Wednesday, February 1 – Module 3 – Municipal Economic Development Fundamentals – Morse

Monday, February 13 – Module 4 – Human Resources in the Municipal Workplace – Willow Bunch

Monday, February 13 – Module 5 – Public Relations and Communications for Municipalities – Lanigan

Thursday, February 16 – Module 2 – Planning For Success – Shellbrook

Thursday, February 16 – Module 3 – Municipal Economic Development Fundamentals – Churchbridge

March

Tuesday, March 21 – Module 4 – Human Resources in the Municipal Workplace – Porcupine Plain

Tuesday, March 21 – Module 5 – Public Relations and Communications for Municipalities – Elrose

More information about the modules, and a printable registration form, can be found at www.mldp.ca. If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Dowler, Program Administrator at 761-3731. There are also a flyer and registration form attached that can be hung in your office, or handed out at your council meeting.

Municipal Marketplace Biggest in the West

It's true. With more display area available, Municipal Marketplace is now the largest trade show of its kind in western Canada. This year you will have more hours to meet with primary suppliers at over 150 displays in the expanded Municipal Marketplace. You will be able to view large equipment displays indoors, and there will be a dedicated show time – 3:00 to 4:00 pm on Monday – when you can tour the show. SUMA's strategic partners will be there, along with at least 41 new exhibitors (and counting) that can provide you with the products and services you need to help grow your community. And, there are no stairs to climb!

Encourage your senior administrators and public works staff to attend the Marketplace with the complimentary passes provided with your registration. Join exhibitors and delegates in the trade show area Monday or Tuesday morning for an early-bird breakfast.

Municipal Marketplace will be open Monday, February 6 from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm and Tuesday, February 7 from 8:00 am to 1:30 pm.