

UrbanVoice

The newsletter of the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association

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New Deal Dollars Expected to Flow Soon

At a signing ceremony held in a cavernous Saskatoon Transit bus garage August 23rd, the federal government agreed to distribute almost \$148 million to Saskatchewan municipalities over the next five years. The money comes from the federal excise tax included in the price of gasoline, and the funding is billed as part of "Canada's New Deal for Cities and Communities."

Prime Minister Paul Martin and Saskatchewan's Minister of Government Relations signed the deal, which was witnessed by SUMA President Don Schlosser and SARM President Neal Hardy. Federal Finance Minister Ralph Goodale, Infrastructure Minister John Godfrey and Saskatoon Mayor Don Atchison looked on as the photo-op completed a two-year process to arrive at a deal. About 150 municipal politicians and administrators attended the event, even though many details of the agreement were reported in the media about two weeks in advance.

"We at SUMA see the funding provided for in this agreement as an important step in creating a new revenue source for Saskatchewan communities, beyond our heavy reliance on the property tax," said Schlosser.



SUMA President Don Schlosser and SARM President Neal Hardy witness the agreement signed August 23 in Saskatoon. Prime Minister Martin (centre), federal Infrastructure Minister John Godfrey (left) and Saskatchewan Government Relations Minister Len Taylor stand in the background.

"For that reason, I believe the taxpayers who live in the communities we represent also welcome this historic agreement today."

The notion that the agreement signals a fundamental change in the relationship among the three levels of government was echoed by the Prime Minister and Minister Taylor. In his remarks, Martin said the agreement marks a new partnership. "Saskatchewan's cities and

communities have stressed the need for new sources of funding, and for a voice in how those investments are made. We've listened," Martin said.

"Canada and Saskatchewan have a long and successful history of collaborative and cooperative administration of federal-provincial-municipal infrastructure programs," Taylor added. "This continues with this

New Deal continued on page 3

Inside this issue

It took a while, but Saskatchewan municipalities now have an agreement that will soon be sending dollars from the federal excise tax on gasoline their way. Our report includes some thoughts on how the money should be spent.

President Don Schlosser explains SUMA's position on Revenue Sharing, and also offers a farewell to Keith Schneider and a welcome to our new Executive Director, Laurent Mougeot.

As the season turns, it's time to turn your mind to educational opportunities. You'll find information about SUMA's upcoming educational sessions and the Municipal Leadership Development Program.

SUMA's Annual Convention is coming closer. We have more information about the convention and trade show. It's not too early to book your hotel room.

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Dawning of a New Direction

SUMA Convention 2006 • February 5-8 in Regina

2006 is the *dawning of a new direction*. As SUMA enters its second century of serving Saskatchewan cities, towns and villages, municipalities are closer than ever before to self-determination. Municipalities are sharing in gas tax revenues from the New Deal with the federal government – a first. Cities, through the *Cities Act*, and towns and villages through *The Municipalities Act*, are now freer to govern themselves.

What does all this mean to Saskatchewan municipalities? What does this mean to you as a council responsible for the impact these changes have on your municipality?

Come to *Dawning of a New Direction*, SUMA's 101st annual convention. Forums, education sessions and discussions with other levels of government

will assist you in setting your direction.

Registration forms will be sent out in October – watch the SUMA website, www.suma.org for more details!

Municipal Marketplace Trade Show – February 6 and 7

Comfortable walking shoes are required when you take in the full extent of the 2006 Municipal Marketplace Trade Show. Our new facilities at the Queensbury (Banner Hall and Ag-Ex Building) will host 200 booths, with companies displaying products and services both long-standing and new in a true trade show atmosphere. Meet with your suppliers – bring along your administrator and town foreman – make the most of the marketplace – a one stop shopping extravaganza.

While at the trade show, take a seat, relax, and hone your brain at education sessions held on stage in the Ag-Ex building – it's new, it's exciting, it's the place to be during convention.

Mardi Gras at SUMA

Yes February is Mardi Gras month and SUMA is joining in on the fun. SUMA delegates will delight in the tastes, sights and sounds of Mardi Gras on Sunday, February 5th at the Queensbury Centre. Be sure you are there – jesters, music, food and, yes, even beads! And the best thing – the only hurricanes will be in your glass!



Resolutions Deadline Approaching

If you are planning to submit a resolution for the upcoming SUMA Annual Convention, the **Resolutions Deadline** will again be **November 15**. Guidelines are listed at www.suma.org under Policy/Resolutions.

President's Message

I am writing this column a few days after signing the federal gas tax agreement on behalf of SUMA members. The provincial government, which is administering the agreement, has assured us that funding will begin flowing to municipalities fairly quickly, which is welcome news to all of us.

The five-year federal gas tax agreement marks the first major expansion of revenue sources for Saskatchewan municipalities in many, many years. While the agreement does place some restrictions on how the funding can be used – with an emphasis on energy-efficient “green” projects – it does give us opportunities to upgrade existing infrastructure and to build new

facilities that will serve our citizens in the future. This is all well and good, but the question remains as to other funding that will help urban municipalities provide the services that our residents demand.

In response, SUMA’s Executive Committee unanimously agreed at its July meeting to develop a strategy to request a \$10 million increase in revenue sharing for urban municipalities from the provincial government at its mid-year review. We are all aware that the steadily increasing price of oil is producing revenues for the province that exceed its budget estimates. We have also seen other sectors receive increased funding or new funding to address specific issues.

SUMA’s aim is to support the work of the tripartite committee established by Government Relations by building a broad base of support for our request among Cabinet ministers, MLAs and influential government officials. Our strategy is to inform and persuade these people of the merits of our position, which is in keeping with Minister Taylor’s request for SUMA’s support in making the case with his Cabinet colleagues.

When you receive information from the SUMA office in the next few days, please act on our request to help make our case in your formal and informal contacts with Cabinet ministers and MLAs. Ours is a positive message, of how Saskatchewan’s cities, towns and villages can contribute to the growth of our province. I ask for your help in spreading the word in the weeks ahead.

As a final note, I am pleased to offer the good wishes of all SUMA members to Keith Schneider, who is retiring from his position as Executive Director after 15 years. Keith has done an outstanding job during those years, and we will miss his deft handling of many difficult issues, his knowledge of the municipal scene, and his memory of issues from the past. He will be missed. We wish him success in whatever endeavours he tackles in the future, including his farm. Good harvesting, Keith!

With Keith’s departure, SUMA is pleased to welcome Laurent Mougeot as the new Executive Director. Laurent will introduce himself to you elsewhere in this issue of *Urban Voice*. On behalf of the members of SUMA:

Welcome Aboard, Laurent!

Executive Director

I am pleased to have this early opportunity to introduce myself to all members of SUMA through *Urban Voice*. Many of you already know me through my career in municipal government in the Prince Albert region and in northern Saskatchewan. I come to the position of Executive Director of SUMA from my previous position as Director of Corporate Services for the City of Prince Albert.

It goes without saying that there will be challenges ahead for me in making the transition to my new post. The learning curve will sometimes be steep. However, I can say that my predecessor, Keith Schneider, members of the Executive and Board have been very helpful and supportive during the transition. I thank them for that.

I also want to say that I am excited about the prospects ahead for SUMA and its members. I want to do my part to ensure that our province’s cities, towns and villages participate fully in the economic and social life of Saskatchewan. I believe our province has developed a renewed sense of optimism, and our communities will be at the centre of what



Laurent Mougeot.

I see as an exciting beginning to Saskatchewan’s second century.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the weeks and months ahead. Thank you for the opportunity to serve you through SUMA, which is itself beginning a second century of service to our province’s cities, towns and villages. By coincidence or not, it seems to be an opportune time to assume my new role as Executive Director, and I am eager to contribute in whatever way I can.

Our Members Write

Kudos to Keith

The following is an excerpt from a letter from Mayor Henri Lepage of Gravelbourg, Saskatchewan.

“Where unanticipated forces beyond our control were affecting our abilities to provide good governance – it was your leadership that would bring influence to those that could help mitigate the damage that might otherwise occur. Where positive policy shifts occurred – you have been at the forefront to ensure that the pie would be divided as evenly and fairly as possible.

Hard to believe, Keith – but you improved the quality of life for hundreds of thousands of people!

We wish you best success in your retirement.”

Dear President Don:

Thank you for nominating me to receive the Saskatchewan Centennial Medal. I felt honoured to be nominated by SUMA. I felt proud to be presented with it on July 6 by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor. It is really nice to be remembered.

Ted Brady,
former SUMA President



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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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New Deal Dollars Expected to Flow Soon

continued from page 1

agreement that will see the provincial government administer the distribution of the federal funds to municipalities based on criteria negotiated by all three levels of government. Saskatchewan people want to see governments find new ways of making decisions.”

The agreement provides for \$17.7 million in the first year, rising to more than \$59 million in the fifth year. A joint federal-provincial news release issued at the event states that the funding is to be used “for environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure and to fund increased municipal planning capacity.” The list of eligible projects provided with the release continued this “green” orientation. Interestingly, two Saskatoon Transit Bio Buses served as a backdrop for the signing ceremony.

While the agreement is part of the federal initiative to reduce the volume of greenhouse gas emissions produced by Canada, the Prime Minister also lauded the deal as “a made-in-Saskatchewan agreement, adapted to meet the unique needs of Saskatchewan municipalities.” Those unique needs may end up being the subject of countless Coffee Row conversations across the province in the weeks and months ahead. In the media scrums that followed, a Canadian Taxpayers Federation representative insisted the money should be used to fill potholes, a point the media seemed to lock in on. Not a single question dealt with eligible projects such as drinking water supply, wastewater infrastructure or solid waste facilities or solid waste management systems.

While the agreement is often referred to as a new deal for cities, smaller municipalities will also receive money from the deal,



SUMA President Don Schlosser, speaking at the gas tax signing ceremony, said the additional funding from the federal government will enable communities to get on with the work that needs to be done.

including about \$3 million for rural municipalities during the first year. SARM President Neal Hardy said the funding will help RMs make some necessary changes for the future. Much of it will be put toward a long-term goal of designating primary-weight haul roads within RMs to complement the highway system.

“This will benefit not only farmers, but oil and gas and other natural resource industries,” Hardy said.

Reflecting the event’s upbeat mood, Schlosser linked it to the province’s Centennial, saying “Our province achieved tremendous progress during the first hundred years, and yet there is a feeling that we are only now beginning to hit our stride. I believe this agreement gives us one more reason to be optimistic and excited about our future in Saskatchewan.”

School Tax Moves Coming

A coalition of organizations – including SUMA – representing Saskatchewan municipal leaders, taxpayers and businesses will be urging the provincial government to reduce our province’s exceptionally high dependence on property taxes to support our schools. The group will be calling on the provincial government to introduce a long-term, sustained funding plan for schools. Currently, Saskatchewan contributes the lowest percentage of school funding of all the provinces.

Besides SUMA, the coalition includes:

- Provincial Association of Resort Communities of Saskatchewan (PARCS)

- Saskatchewan Association of Rural Communities (SARM)
- Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce
- Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA)

The coalition acknowledges the \$55 million property tax credit provided by the province in the current budget year, and the similar amount committed for next year. While this provides some short-term relief for property taxpayers, the coalition states that more funding is needed, noting the report of the province’s Commission on Financing K-12 Education reached the same conclusion.

Watch for updates on coalition activities in your electronic Urban Update.

New Deal Agreement Brings Various Thoughts, Reactions

Following the signing of the New Deal agreement, Urban Voice asked some municipal representatives what they see as priorities for their communities, including possible regional projects. Here is the feedback received.

“It is certainly welcome news for our community. Whatever funding is available to us at this time is a step in the right direction. Tisdale in particular has a great need, as we have a very old water treatment plant that needs replacing. We are also beginning work on our landfill, which is near capacity. We are presently working with all possible stakeholders in our area to develop and maintain a top-notch environmental waste disposal site, with recycling being a major component.”

– Mayor Roland Zimmer, Town of Tisdale

“We’ve been given an opportunity by the federal government’s NEW DEAL to work on our own projects and on regional projects; be they landfills, water and sewer projects, or whatever fits the agreement. The ball is in our court; we had better not drop it.

The cities will always have a place to put this money to good use. The exciting part of this agreement is the regional co-operation on projects. If we don’t understand that, then we should not be here.”

– Mayor Phil DeVos, City of Yorkton

“As a community leader I can tell you we are ecstatic about the opportunity to send in project proposals that we feel will meet the criteria to access New Deal money. I only wish the Province would jump on the band wagon and share some of the gas (fuel) tax money that they collect from all of us, and we could really make some things happen.”

– Mayor Allan Earle, Town of Dalmeny

“The Town of Kerrobert will devote the entire amount to our water lines and paving. This will cover only 15% of the entire cost. The need for infrastructure is much greater because governments have downloaded so much onto the backs of the municipalities. All assistance is welcome.”

– Mayor Erhard Poggemiller, Town of Kerrobert

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Where the rubber meets the road

This summer Saskatchewan Highways partnered with the Saskatchewan Scrap Tire Corporation, the University of Regina, the City of Regina and the National Research Council to examine the potential of paving with rubber asphalt. A stretch of about 10 kilometres was paved on the northbound and southbound driving lanes of Highway 11, just south of Chamberlain. The crumb rubber used came from recycled scrap tires. The rubber asphalt produces less traffic noise and longer pavement life than conventional asphalt. (Photo courtesy Saskatchewan Scrap Tire Corporation.)



Solar Heated Pools

By the time you read this article, residents in two Saskatchewan communities will have dipped their toes in solar-heated water at their local swimming pools. Bengough inaugurated its solar heated pool in June, while Assiniboia expected to have its solar installation operational before the end of August.

SUMA launched a program to encourage such installations in partnership with Kelln Solar of Lumsden, in the fall of 2004. Bengough got off to an early

start before the program was officially launched, taking advantage of both federal and provincial grants to reduce the cost of the project. The Bengough pool also had the advantage of a nearby building with an angled roof which was ideally situated for mounting the solar panels.

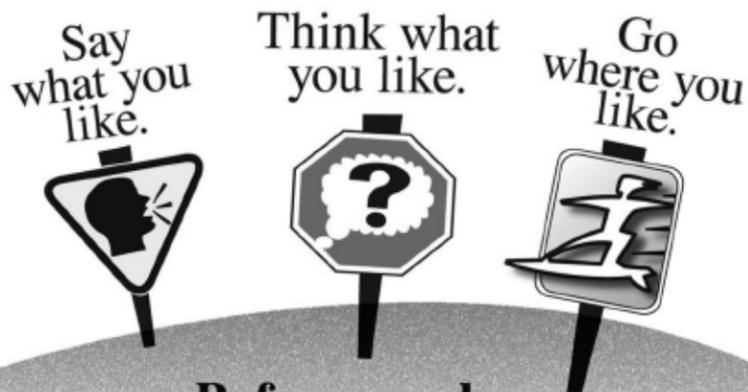
Assiniboia had hoped to have its system running earlier in the summer, but a delay in approval of a provincial grant stalled the installation. "The construction

job was straightforward, except for the need to build trusses to hold the panels on the flat roof of our Aquatic Centre," said Harvey Hysuik, Parks and Recreation Director for the Town. "Once the system is working I expect it will reduce our heating bills by about 75 per cent."

Will Oddie of Kelln Solar says a typical installation for a municipal pool will pay for itself in reduced energy costs in five to seven years. Grants such as the federal Renewable Energy Deployment Initiative (REDI) could reduce the payback period to as little as four years, using today's energy costs to make the calculations.

Since the program was announced Kelln Solar has conducted 22 on-site evaluations to determine the cost of adding solar heating to municipal pools. While Assiniboia was the only community to proceed this summer, Kelln Solar expects others may include the project in their budgeting for 2006, since the REDI grant, which pays for up to 25 per cent of the project cost, will still be available.

"The panels are warranted for 12 years, but will probably last for 15," Oddie said. "It could be an awesome amount of money saved over that period if energy prices keep going higher."



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Education Sessions for Fall

SUMA has arranged several education sessions for this fall, to inform elected officials, administrators and municipal employees. First up is a seminar on Youth Crime.

Youth Crime: September 27 in Regina and September 28 in Saskatoon

Youth Crime is a follow-up to last year's session on policing, which drew requests for more sessions. This seminar will cover topical issues associated with policing, and also address the growing challenge of youth crime in Saskatchewan. Topics include how early childhood development plays a role in youth crime, youth gangs, community policing organizations, and more.

Crystal Meth: October 13 in Regina and October 14 in Saskatoon

The guest speaker for the morning will be Serge LeClerc, Director of Teen Challenge Saskatchewan, a faith-based, residential recovery program for substance abusers. The afternoon will feature Saskatoon Northwest MLA Ted Merriman, who is the father of a recovering crystal meth user. Also speaking will be Saskatoon Sutherland MLA Graham Addley, who recently submitted his report on crystal meth to the provincial government. This led to the launch of a new provincial strategy on addictions treatment.

Aboriginal Community Issues, November 1 at Yorkton and November 2 at Prince Albert (Note change in locations)

People of Aboriginal descent constitute a growing portion of our province's population, and municipal governments have a direct interest in working with Aboriginal leaders and organizations. This information session will expose the myths and break down the cultural barriers that hinder understanding in Saskatchewan, and also present some positive ideas of how municipalities and First Nations' governments can work together to make our province the best place to live in Canada. Registration deadline is October 15, 2005

Sorting Out Recycling Issues: November 29 in Regina and November 30 in Saskatoon

Help us collect and recycle the valuable ideas... and dispose of the rest. The provincial Cabinet has told Saskatchewan Environment to have a multi-material recycling program in place by next year. SUMA's own task force on Regional Waste Recycling has been supporting this initiative, along with other partnering organizations. Attend this session to learn more about possible revenue sources from recycling, as well as the regulatory requirements for sustaining recycling in your municipality and region.

The fee for each seminar is \$85, which includes the seminar, lunch and materials.

Flyers and registration forms can be downloaded from the SUMA website, www.suma.org. Click on "Education Sessions" under Member Services.

MLDP Offers 14 Sessions In Fall 2005

Since the Municipal Leadership Development Program began two years ago, 870 leaders from around the province have attended more than 58 seminars. The Municipal Leadership Development Program is a series of five modules tailored to the specific issues facing northern, rural and urban municipalities. Twenty-five people have completed all five MLDP modules.

The Fall session of the program offers 14 opportunities for councillors and administrators to brush up on their leadership skills. All modules run from 9 am to 4 pm.

Tuesday, October 4
Module 5 – Public Relations and Communications for Municipalities, Osler

Tuesday, October 4
Module 3 – Municipal Economic Development Fundamentals, Radville

Wednesday, October 12
Module 2 – Planning for Success, Strasbourg

Thursday, October 13
Module 3 – Municipal Economic Development Fundamentals, Belle Plaine

Tuesday, October 18
Module 4 – Human Resources for the Municipal Workplace, Redvers

Wednesday, November 16
Module 2 – Planning for Success, Biggar

Wednesday, November 16
Module 4 – Human Resources for the Municipal Workplace, Shaunavon

Thursday, November 17
Module 3 – Municipal Economic Development Fundamentals, Manitou Beach

Wednesday, November 23
Module 1 – Municipal Leaders' Roles and Responsibilities, Regina
*NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Thursday, November 24
Module 1 – Municipal Leaders' Roles and Responsibilities, Saskatoon
*NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED

Wednesday, November 30
Module 5 – Public Relations and Communications for Municipalities, Swift Current

Tuesday, December 6
Module 5 – Public Relations and Communications for Municipalities, Indian Head

Wednesday, December 7
Module 2 – Planning for Success, Yorkton

Thursday, December 8
Module 4 – Human Resources for the Municipal Workplace, Eyebrow

More information about the modules and registration forms can be found at www.mldp.ca or by calling Kristin Dowler at 306-565-3731.

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Request 10% Ethanol, LaBelle Asks

The head of the Saskatchewan Ethanol Development Council is asking SUMA members to request a 10 per cent ethanol fuel blend the next time they issue a fuel tender for their municipality. Lionel LaBelle made the appeal during his presentation at the SUMA June Board meeting held in Yorkton.

"If all SUMA members asked for a 10 per cent ethanol blend in their tenders, it would force more capacity requirements in this province, and it would cost you

nothing," LaBelle said. For certain, Husky and Petrocan will respond to your tenders, and the others will have to come around."

LaBelle said ethanol production in Canada has remained relatively flat for the past seven years, but that is about to change, with plants in Weyburn and Lloydminster coming on stream soon. However, three Saskatchewan proponents that had submitted requests in the second round of federal funding to encourage more domestic ethanol production were turned down.

In his presentation LaBelle surveyed various ethanol plants proposed around the province, including Unity, Birch Hills, Tisdale and Nipawin. The \$300 million plant being built by Iogen at Birch Hills will use straw as its feedstock, producing cellulose ethanol. The proposed 75-million-litre-per-year plant at Nipawin would use wood waste as its feedstock.

"And then there's Poundmaker at Lanigan, where the dry distillers

grain byproduct from ethanol production is fed to cattle as a high protein supplement," said LaBelle. "Using that model at different locations, we could finish an additional 300,000 head of cattle in Saskatchewan, instead of shipping them south. An \$800 million investment in Saskatchewan ethanol would create 9,000 construction jobs, 2,700 permanent jobs, and a demand for many other services."

Sask Crime Stoppers Leads the Way at International Conference

Representatives from over 17 nations gathered in Calgary mid-August for the 29th annual Crime Stoppers International Training Conference. Six delegates were on hand from Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers representing our provincial program.

"I had no idea how huge and important this program really is," said Cam Baker, SUMA's representative on Crime Stoppers Saskatchewan Board of Directors. "Crime Stoppers, whether it be in Saskatchewan, Trinidad or New Mexico, plays such an integral role in public safety and law

enforcement. Saskatchewan's program is held amongst some of the best in the world."

Saskatchewan's delegates, along with Sgt. Rob Ruiters from the RCMP's Pipeline/Convoy/Jetway program, had the honour of announcing to representatives from around the world a ground breaking new partnership with Saskatchewan's Yanke Group of Companies. Currently being billed as a "pilot project", the three-way partnership will see Yanke put the Crime Stoppers name and toll-free number on the back of 1,100 cargo trailers, which cover in excess of 70,000,000 miles annually.

In addition to announcing Saskatchewan's successes, attendees to the conference gathered valuable information on how to improve and solidify local Crime Stoppers programs through centralized call centers, maintaining the principles of anonymity, and effective techniques for promoting the 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) phone number. Of particular interest to SUMA members is the information obtained in the areas of youth crime, gangs, marijuana grow operations, domestic violence, and issues of national security. Some of these will be presented at SUMA's Youth Crime Education Sessions on September 27 and 28.

The most notable presentation was a round-table discussion about the role of Crime Stoppers in the war on terrorism. Panel representatives, along with Sgt. Ruiters from RCMP 'F' Division, came from Scotland Yard, the Northern Ireland Police Constabulary, the F.B.I., and the

Calgary Police Service. The panelists agreed that it's not necessarily these massive organizations, but rather smaller programs such as Saskatchewan's, that are playing a key role in quashing tragic terrorist events before they come to fruition.

As Saskatchewan's cities, towns and villages continue to sign on to Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers, the mechanics are being put in place to ensure the program will continue as a leader in fighting crime provincially, nationally, and internationally. Each voluntary levy received and every sign posted increases the chances of justice being served in all our communities.

For more information on the partnership with Yanke trucking, go to www.saskcrimestoppers.com.



Thank you

Thank you to SUMA for partnering with Saskatchewan Crimestoppers through a voluntary levy.

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Saskatchewan Communities Celebrate Waste Reduction Week

October 17-23, 2005

Waste Reduction Week highlights the benefits of doing more with less.

The Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council encourages your community to celebrate Waste Reduction Week:



- Organize tours of recycling facilities in your community
- Plan a composting workshop for the public
- Encourage schools, libraries & community groups to coordinate waste reduction activities and events

Visit the WRW website, www.wrwcanda.com for more information and to register your events. See also www.saskwastereduction.ca or contact SWRC at 306-931-3242 or swrc@link.ca.

Waste Reduction Week is sponsored in part by:




BMO and SUMA Strategic Partnership Program

Guest column by Gerry Syrota, Senior Commercial Banking Manager, BMO

BMO Bank of Montreal launched the Group Financing Program for SUMA members at the 100th Anniversary Convention in 2005. Interest in this new program from municipalities has been tremendous, with several credit applications approved or in the final completion stages. The SUMA Group Financing Program offers special pricing for all members, whether for one transaction or for all your banking business, based on the overall SUMA relationship. In this way BMO is able to offer you what we feel are the most beneficial rates in the market today.

Additionally, many municipalities have inquired about the benefits and offerings in the program, including term deposits, payroll and group banking services, the approval process, costs, and grants. The majority of credit requests have been for new projects; however, it is important to consider transferring existing loans for what may be worthwhile interest rate savings.

As we move forward, the New Deal within the Strategic Partnership Program provides additional opportunities for us to work together. Now is the time to make the most of low interest rates and loan terms. By taking advantage of the rates and terms available, you may be able to start or complete projects earlier, and likely at a lower cost.

We at BMO would like to thank the many Administrators who have welcomed our calls and taken the opportunity to work through mutually beneficial transactions. BMO Bank of Montreal takes pride in its active sponsorship and participation with SUMA's Information Sessions, Administrators' Conference and Golf Tournament. These are great events for building rapport and sharing thoughts and ideas. We also look forward to building on the success of the Strategic Partnership Program.

BMO Financial Group – founded in 1817 as Bank of Montreal,

Canada's first bank – is a highly diversified financial services provider. With more than 33,000 employees, BMO provides a broad range of banking, wealth management and investment products and solutions. BMO serves clients across Canada through BMO Bank of Montreal, offering personal and commercial banking, BMO Harris Private Banking and BMO Nesbitt Burns, one of North America's leading full-service investment firms.

As one of Canada's largest businesses and as a responsible

company that believes in good corporate citizenship, BMO also has a key role to play in helping to ensure that Canada's regions, towns and communities remain strong and vibrant.

We are prepared to go that extra mile with SUMA members to strengthen your organization's financial footing. Feel free to give us a call if you are looking for financing options, investments solutions or cash management services.

Green is the Colour...

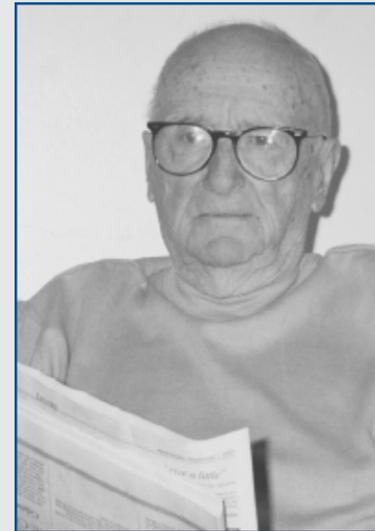
The 2004-2005 Annual Report of the Green Municipal Funds, which are administered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, includes a profile of "green" initiatives in the Town of Craik. The annual report does not appear to be on the FCM website, but there are several files on green topics that can be downloaded under the "Programs" menu. You can select from the list under "Green Funds", or click on this link:

<http://www.fcm.ca/english/gmf/publications.html>

SUMA HISTORY

Herb Partridge Remembers Earlier Attempt at Local Government Reform

The following story comes in a roundabout way. Executive Director Keith Schnieder was talking with Dub Henderson, a former SUMA Director and Mayor of the City of Melfort, who mentioned that he'd been speaking to the former Mayor of Gull Lake, Herb Partridge. Partridge had participated in discussions aimed at local government reform back in the 1950s. He related to Dub that he's been watching recent moves to consolidate school divisions with interest, as they reminded him of his own experiences. Urban Voice interviewed Mr. Partridge and pieced together this story of local government reform, 1950s style.



Herb Partridge, former Mayor of Gull Lake, remembers efforts to re-organize municipal governments.

Herb Partridge, who will turn 95 in October 2005, recalls sitting as a SUMA representative on a committee chaired by then Minister of Municipal Affairs L.F. "Lockie" McIntosh from approximately 1953 to 1957. This generally coincides with the term of the Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life, which was established in 1952 and completed its work in 1956. However, the committee Partridge refers to seems to have been a separate entity, as then Premier T.C. Douglas also occasionally attended its meetings, indicating the strong interest in the outcome of its work.

Partridge recalls floating the idea of combining three or four rural municipalities into one county, as has recently

been done in Alberta, using his own area as an example. "You have the RM of Carmichael and the RM of Gull Lake, that have offices in the town office building. And then you have the RM of Webb just 12 miles up the road," Partridge says. "These could have been combined into one manageable unit."

As far as Partridge can remember, his involvement in the initiative ended there. He moved to Lethbridge in 1958 before moving back to Saskatchewan in the mid-1960s. However, the history of the government's initiative is instructive.

As it happened, the Royal Commission did recommend larger municipal units, "with boundaries coterminous with school divisions, administered

by a council and school board, or a county performing both functions." A Local Government Conference held in 1956 considered the Commission's recommendations. Press reports indicate most support for the County system came from the School Trustees' Association, with SUMA favouring some form of reorganization. SARM insisted that the re-allocation of functions and responsibilities was the prerequisite for any other discussions, which led to the creation of a Local Government Continuing Committee to further study the issues involved from 1957 to 1961.

The LGCC also recommended a county system as the preferred option, but the

committee appears not to have devoted enough time to an education and consultation process with the general public. Without widespread public support, the initiative foundered. Some of the initial interest in pilot project reorganizations turned to resistance after the province passed enabling legislation in 1962 without the promised final consultations with SARM.

Looking back, Partridge says he was disappointed, but not frustrated, that the idea of larger municipal governments did not come to pass. From his senior's perspective four decades later Partridge declares, "It was a good idea then, and it's a good idea now."

UMAAS UPDATE:

Education Programming Changing

by **Orrin Redden, RMA,**
Division #3 Director

The University of Regina Local Government Authority (LGA) Advisory Group held an interesting meeting this past June. The LGA Advisory Group is comprised of representatives from the U of R Credit Studies Division, Department of Government Relations, RMAAS (Rural Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan) and UMAAS (Urban Municipal Administrators Association of Saskatchewan).

I attended this meeting in the absence of our regular representative and found the subject matter topical and enlightening. Others may be interested in learning more about this group's working agenda.

Most readers are aware of the long-standing relationship municipal government has shared with the U of R. LGA program graduates fill a significant number of the administrator positions in rural and urban municipal offices throughout Saskatchewan and other jurisdictions.

While the core courses remain largely unchanged, course updates are required regularly, and indeed significantly, when incorporating change such as the new *Municipalities Act*. In these instances, course instructors, Government Relations staff and others work to ensure LGA graduates receive current course materials.

Perhaps the most monumental change to affect the LGA program since its inception in 1966 went somewhat unnoticed. Effective May 1, 2005, the program name was changed to the Certificate in Local Government Authority (CLGA) to reflect the transdisciplinary nature of the program and the increasingly diverse roles taken on by administrators.

In addition, all LGA courses now carry University credits which can be used towards degree programs in the Faculty of Arts at the U of R. Exposing more students to the LGA program will certainly help to educate more future municipal administrators. The projected



retirement numbers that UMAAS is seeing indicate there will be challenges filling municipal administrator positions in the near future, if in fact this is not already the case. I think these changes are a positive step toward meeting this challenge.

The LGA Advisory group is working on other program and service changes designed to expose the CLGA program to a broad range of candidates, whether they are full-time students, part-time students or

distance learners, expanding the program and increasing graduate numbers. Other areas being explored include an Advanced Certificate Program as well as a Local Government & Politics Degree program.

UMAAS looks forward to working cooperatively with SUMA, our elected officials and other stakeholders to market these exciting advancements in Local Government Administration.

Communities of Tomorrow to host “Building Our Communities”

by **Randy Johnson,**
Business Development Officer,
Communities of Tomorrow

Do you ever ask yourself how long our communities will last if we continue to do the same things in the same way? What will our communities look like in 10, 50, or 100 years if we don't start working together to live and grow in a way that recognizes that all of our decisions and actions today will affect tomorrow's citizens?

We know that each community needs to develop a toolkit that supports its residents, current and future, in their efforts to lead prosperous, productive and fulfilling lives. To help our communities acquire the contents of that toolkit, Communities of Tomorrow will host an inaugural, national conference called “Building Our Communities” to examine these issues. The conference will be held in Regina October 23 to 25, 2005.

The conference will address issues such as:

- What can we do now to use our resources more efficiently?
- How can we attract new residents to our communities, and then support them so they want to stay?
- How should our infrastructure solutions be adapting to new fiscal and environmental realities?

These questions and others are begging for answers. COT views the Building Our Communities conference as a first step to create a network of community members who are well-equipped and committed to seeking out the common threads in the processes that lead to better, wiser use of community assets; engaging the disenfranchised members of our communities; and creating a vibrant economic, social and cultural environment that is more conducive not only to survival, but also to prosperity.

The conference is being organized by COT in partnership



solutions for sustainability

with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as a Saskatchewan Centennial initiative. An impressive lineup of topics and conference presenters is already in place. Conference organizers hope to attract over 500 representatives from cities, towns and municipalities across Canada.

This conference will lay the foundation for a legacy that will allow conference attendees to network and communicate with subject matter experts and others from cities and towns across Canada on an ongoing basis. We take this opportunity through *Urban Voice* to invite elected members from Saskatchewan's cities, towns and villages to attend.

More information regarding the conference and registration information is available online at www.ctinfo.ca/conference or by calling Communities of Tomorrow at (306) 522-6691.

Province Launches Plan to Combat Substance Abuse

Delegates to the 2005 SUMA Convention passed three resolutions asking the province to establish an action plan on Crystal Meth. In early August the province unveiled a plan to address not just crystal meth, but the whole area of substance abuse prevention and treatment. Dubbed “Premier's Project Hope”, the government committed \$10 million in new annual funding for addiction prevention and treatment, based on recommendations in the report prepared by Graham Addley, the Saskatoon MLA appointed by the Premier to investigate the issue.

Among the initiatives are a new 15-bed residential youth treatment facility in Prince Albert, a 12-bed youth stabilization unit in Saskatoon and 12 brief detox beds in Regina. The province will also provide more resources to reduce the supply of drugs reaching the streets, create a new Alcohol and Drug Prevention and Education Directorate and establish a drug treatment court. The complete report, “Healthy Choices in a Healthy Community” is available at www.publications.gov.sk.ca.

For more information on crystal meth, go to www.suma.org



**Communities
of Tomorrow**
PARTNERS FOR SUSTAINABILITY