

UrbanVoice

The newsletter of the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association

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Saskatchewan enters new era of Municipal Governance

Nearly three long years of work on behalf of Saskatchewan's Towns and Villages came to fruition on May 17, as the Municipalities Act was passed by the Legislative Assembly. Based on the success of the Cities Act, the new legislation will introduce the principles of Natural Person Powers and Areas of Jurisdiction to towns, villages, resort villages, and rural municipalities.

Accompanying the permissive provisions are enhancements to public notice policy, public participation provisions, and flexible bylaw making authority in areas such as nuisances and emergency suppression charges.

The consolidation process, a project to involve rural municipalities in the fine work already set to action by SUMA's Towns and Villages Legislative Review Committee (TVLRC),

began back in March of 2004. Representatives from SARM, SUMA, UMAAS, RMAAS and Government Relations worked feverishly throughout the last year to prepare a completed act for the fall 2004 session. The House concluded that more consultation was necessary, and a refined Bill was prepared for this spring's session.

Working with the confidence that the Bill would pass, SUMA, SARM, RMAAS, UMAAS, PARCS, and Government Relations have undertaken a process to enact an education strategy for the new legislation called the Municipalities Act Preparedness Committee (MAP). The first phase of the MAP committee's process is nearly complete, with a series of informational bulletins already distributed to all municipalities,

and presentations at the SUMA and SARM regional/district meetings as well as at the UMAAS and RMAAS conventions. The second phase will commence in the fall where municipalities can expect a series of full day seminars in six areas around the province. Administrators can also expect checklists and cross-reference guides to ease the transition from the old to new legislation.

Finally SUMA would like to thank SARM, Government Relations, the members of SUMA's TVLRC, and especially our legislative drafters, Merrilee Rasmussen and Theresa Dust.

For more information on the new legislation, visit www.municipal.gov.sk.ca or www.suma.a.

Gas tax deal for Saskatchewan nearing completion

At the recent FCM national conference in St. John's both Prime Minister Martin and Infrastructure Minister Godfrey spoke glowingly of what New Deal infrastructure funding could do for communities of all sizes throughout the country.

There are two things which must happen first before the funds will flow; the federal budget must pass, and federal/provincial bilateral agreements must be signed. That can only happen, as Minister Godfrey clearly stated, with the approval of the respective municipal governments.

In Saskatchewan, a committee of federal/provincial/municipal officials is working to have an agreement ready for signing by the end of June. Discussions are

still needed around issues such as:

- the status of roads and bridges;
- how municipalities receive the funding;
- the allocation of any interest earned; and
- responsibility for administrative costs.

All of these issues can be worked out with face-to-face meetings and in a spirit of cooperation, with the desire to make it happen.

At this time, only Alberta and Yukon have formal signed agreements with the federal government in place. British Columbia has an agreement in principle, which will form the basis of the final agreement. It is expected that at least two other provinces will be signing on shortly. While each agreement is

similar in intent and purpose, they are being individually tailored to suit provincial and municipal interests in each jurisdiction.

Each agreement refers to environmentally sustainable infrastructure projects, and in some manner, to community sustainable planning. What that might mean in the Saskatchewan context remains to be seen. There is a regional component which must be noted to reflect the linkages among urban and rural municipalities of various sizes. How to engage municipal leaders and others in the sustainability planning process is another outstanding issue which will need more time to define and to determine how to go about it.

Inside this issue

In this issue long serving Executive Director Keith Schneider pens some farewell thoughts as he pursues his personal back-to-the-land movement.

As everyone prepares to enjoy (hopefully) summer in Saskatchewan, with many Centennial activities, we have some information about Convention 2006 in frosty February. It's not too soon to book your room.

President Don Schlosser offers some thoughts on SARM's Clearing the Path initiative, and we have a report on the Regional meetings held around the province so far.

This issue also contains a special pull out section with all responses received from the resolutions passed at the 2005 Convention.

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Quote of the month

"Many of the challenges facing Canada's cities and communities are part of larger issues that cannot be addressed by municipal governments alone. Municipal governments will continue to take the lead on issues that affect their communities, but we need the cooperation of all orders of government to find and deliver long-term solutions."

– FCM President Ann MacLean, Mayor of New Glasgow, N.S.

SUMA continues to pursue Crystal Meth problem

At SUMA's 100th annual convention in early February of this year, delegates resoundingly passed three resolutions pertaining to the highly addictive and destructive drug, Crystal Methamphetamine, more commonly known as Crystal Meth. SUMA's Protective Services Committee has been working on this file for quite some time, and as a proper next step, met with members of both the Government and Official Opposition in early May.

The delegation met with the Premier's Legislative Secretary

for Substance Abuse, Saskatoon Sutherland MLA Graham Addley. Addley has been consulting with stakeholders around the province in an attempt to draft a comprehensive strategy to tackle Crystal Meth and other major addictions, an action suggested in one of the three SUMA resolutions. Originally scheduled to be released in December of this year, urgency surrounding this problem has prompted Addley to complete his report by the end of this month, and also prompted the Premier to convene Justice, Health and

Safety Ministers from the four western provinces and three territories. Also, members from Idaho, North Dakota and Montana were invited.

SUMA's Protective Services Team then met with Opposition members June Draude and Yogi Huyghebaert later in the day. Draude has been exceptionally active and vociferous on the crystal meth file and working diligently to find a solution to the problem. In this spring's session of the Legislature, Draude introduced a Private Members Bill, based on legislation recently

passed in Alberta, called the *Protection of Children Addicted to Drugs Act*. In effect, the legislation would allow parents to have their drug addicted children apprehended and forced into rehabilitation. SUMA will continue to follow this bill very closely.

For more information on Crystal Meth action in Saskatchewan, visit our Crystal Meth Information Center at www.suma.org.

President's Message

Over the past 18 months SUMA has supported the Clearing the Path (CTP) initiative undertaken by our counterparts in the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities. SARM began the initiative after receiving the same message from many different stakeholders: that creating new businesses in rural Saskatchewan is more costly and unpredictable than it needs to be, due to differing regulations, fees and permits among various municipalities. This was identified as a major obstacle to economic development in rural Saskatchewan. SARM established the Clearing the Path Committee to examine the scale of the problem and to propose solutions.

The CTP Committee has issued a set of recommendations that rural municipalities and communities can choose to implement on a voluntary basis. While SUMA members are not faced with the same situation as our rural colleagues, we recognize that new business developments, whether they are located in urban or rural settings, often have consequences for both urban and rural governments. I encourage SUMA members to become familiar with the CTP recommendations and, in partnership with RMs, explore how they might be implemented for our mutual benefit.

SUMA has a common interest in working with our rural



counterparts to attract new investment and new businesses to Saskatchewan. New business developments often bring benefits to both urban and rural jurisdictions, and certainly

contribute to strengthening Saskatchewan's economy. SUMA is in favour of setting out common rules and streamlining regulations wherever possible, to help to achieve those goals.

Executive Director

This is my last article for the Urban Voice. I will be stepping down this fall after 13 years at SUMA's administrative helm to pursue other challenges – whatever they might be – but including farming a small holding in the Foam Lake area.

For over a decade it was my privilege to serve the interests of Saskatchewan municipal governments, from the largest city to the smallest village. There were many challenges and opportunities to advance the interests of municipal government. There were, of course, setbacks and frustrations which come with the territory and test the resolve of all involved.

I would like to think that at the end of the day progress was made – maybe not as quickly as we wished, but nevertheless steps were taken and changes made. Particularly in the field of advocacy, work is never done and new opportunities continue to open up at every turn. To use a sports metaphor, history will judge whether we moved the ball down the field.

As I leave the stage, I do so with the knowledge and comfort of

knowing that the dialogue between urban and rural, large and small communities, and with the provincial government has grown to the point where solutions are being collectively discussed. More importantly, attitudes are shifting. Complete dependency on the provincial government is waning, which is a good thing. Municipal leaders are looking within for the answers wherever possible.

I would be most remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to thank the many people who touched my life and made me better than I am.

First, the councils in our cities, towns and villages and their staff, who always extended me their warm courtesy and were there to help when called upon. Over the years it was my pleasure to get to know people throughout the length and breadth of the province. I will particularly remember the many "characters" who added a little extra spice to regional meetings and the annual conventions.

Second, the SUMA boards and executives, past and present, who gave me guidance and the



Lieutenant-Governor Linda Haverstock and SUMA Executive Director Keith Schneider at Saskatchewan Centennial Medal presentation, April 7, 2005.

wisdom of their experience. Their support was critical to carrying out the initiatives and mapping new directions. I worked with many fine local government leaders at the board table and respect their dedication and commitment to help their fellow citizen through public office. It is often not easy. They have my admiration for stepping forward. I will cherish the friendships we made over the years.

Lastly, I was gifted to have an outstanding group of people in the SUMA office to work with. Their dedication and many talents never failed to meet the challenges we

faced together. I am in their debt and will remember with pleasure the many fun times we enjoyed over the years which made some of the more difficult issues more manageable.

As a footnote, I would like to also acknowledge the people in the provincial government I had dealings with during my tenure – staff, ministers and MLAs. They are a fine bunch of people who strive to do the best they can. Over time I believe we developed a sound and respectful working relationship which served the best interests of our communities.

My future plans are uncharted, other than trying to break even on a small farm holding. If I succeed, I will be one of few, which might give me the opportunity of starting a consulting career.

In closing, my heartfelt thanks to all and as they say in the rural coffee shops "catch you later".



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Collaborating for Local Government Development

A SUMA/FCM and Namibia, Africa National Workshop

Windhoek, Namibia – May 22-27, 2005

Yorkton City Councillor Randy Goulden – like her counterparts across the province – spends a lot of time thinking about the state of local roads and sewers, the level of policing and many other bread and butter issues. In her recent work with UCAZ (Urban Councils of Zimbabwe) and ALAN (Association of Local Authorities in Namibia) she observes that many issues are the same. She prepared this column on her recent experiences in Africa as she traveled back to Canada for the FCM conference.

While the issues are the same, the urbanization is more rapid in Africa, with a large chasm between rich and poor. Almost

half the population of Sub-Saharan Africa lives on less than \$1 a day and average life expectancy is 47 years.

Municipal governments in Africa are also responsible for primary education, health care, and housing.

The Namibian National Partners Workshop continues the partnership that had ALAN councillors and NALAO (administrators) participate in SUMA's 100th anniversary convention earlier this year.

With funding from CIDA (Canadian International Development Authority), FCM and SUMA

along with their Namibian partners collaborated at the workshop aimed at developmental strategies for local authorities in Namibia. The strategies will form the content of a CIDA-funded program to mobilize the people and build the capacities required to provide good local government in Namibia.

The benefits from this partnership will also provide FCM and SUMA with things we can do differently here, and enhance Canada's and Saskatchewan's standing in the world – as a concerned and caring member of the international community.



Yorkton City Councillor Randy Goulden

Municipal Rescue Services Fund update

There have been some recent changes to the administration of the Municipal Rescue Services Fund you need to be aware of. All MRSF claims will now be adjudicated by SUMA's finance department. Marsha Tucker, Accounting Assistant, and Michelle Paetsch, Manager of Finance and Administration, look forward to helping you with any inquiries. You can reach them at 525-4385.

The updated MRSF manual is now available. If you were unable to pick up your updated copy at the UMAAS Convention, one will be mailed to you. Updated claim forms are also available at www.suma.org.

Changes to the manual include the following rate increases, and were effective January 1, 2005:

- \$550 per productive hour increased to \$562.10

- \$350 per non-productive hour increased to \$357.70

A new policy, set by the MRSF Committee, makes it mandatory that all claims to be accompanied by a "Call Out Report" for each incident. The Call Out Report is additional to existing reporting requirements for submission of all claims. Failure to provide all required documentation and incomplete Vehicle, Fire and

Accident Claim forms will result in the rejection of the claim.

Other changes to the administration of MRSF claims include revamping the MRSF database and systems, and the processes used in adjudicating claims. These changes will realize efficiencies in the claim adjudication process and provide the Committee with useful information in analyzing statistics.

SUMA Advantage Seminars

Three SUMA education seminars have been selected for this fall. All sessions are one-day seminars with a choice of location in Regina or Saskatoon. To register for any of these seminars go to the SUMA website www.suma.org under Member Services Educational Seminars or phone Shantel Lipp at 306-525-4398 for more information.

Youth Crime – September 27 & 28, 2005

Is youth crime a concern in your municipality? Many Saskatchewan towns, villages

and cities are struggling with increased organized crime, vandalism, and drugs such as Crystal Meth. To get more information on how your community can protect your youth before it's too late, or to learn about initiatives like community policing, come out to this one-day seminar and hear from the experts.

Aboriginal Community Issues – November 1 & 2, 2005

This session focuses on breaking down the barriers facing our First Nations' people. Listen to how

the changing demographic in Saskatchewan is affecting our province and gain ideas about working together with Aboriginal leaders to ensure that everyone has the same interest – strengthening our communities.

Sorting Out Recycling Issues – November 29 & 30, 2005

Is your community trying to sort out ways to reduce waste and promote recycling? This one-day seminar provides information on what's new in the recycling industry and what programs your community can adopt to reduce waste. Topics discussed include

"E-waste, what is it?", "How to properly dispose of used paint?" and "What are the regulatory requirements in your municipality, and how can you make recycling a source of revenue?"

If you have suggestions for other SUMA Advantage seminars, please contact us, and remember – membership has its advantages!



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

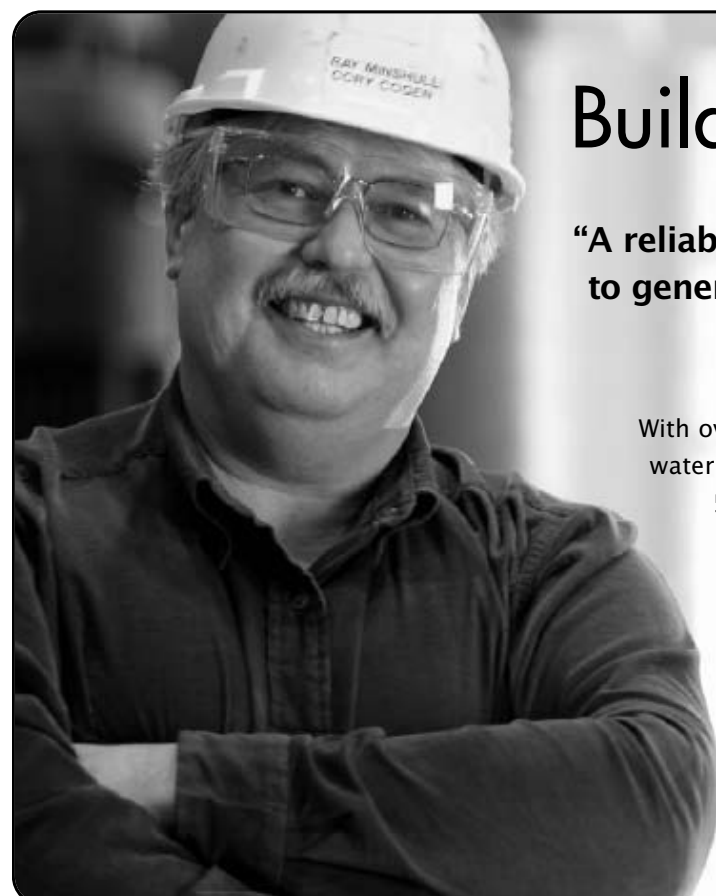
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The City of Lloydminster, Canada's only Bi-provincial City, located within the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan has a position available for a Transportation/Works Engineer.

Reporting to the Director of Planning & Public Works, the candidate will direct and coordinate engineering and management services for the operation, capital and maintenance requirements for streets, roads, storm water management facilities and the public works department. Will supervise and coordinate engineering with consultants and contractors on capital projects. Will act as liaison with provincial government departments on transportation projects. The candidate will be responsible for the preparation of budgets, analysis of utility data and preparation of contracts and agreements.

Qualifications: A minimum of 5 years experience in the municipal engineering field with increasing levels of responsibility and strong management capabilities is preferred. Must be eligible for membership in APEGGA and APEGS. Salary for this position is \$59,450 – \$ 69,997 per annum. Resumes are to be forwarded to:

City of Lloydminster
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Book now for 2006 Convention!!

With the 2005 annual convention barely over, it's time to think about booking your hotel rooms for the next SUMA annual convention February 5 – 8, 2006, in Regina.

The Delta is already sold out. The Regina Inn is SUMA's host hotel for special guests, hospitality night and other related events. Check the SUMA website, www.suma.org under Convention for complete details on hotel availability, rates, reservation information and more.

Improved Meeting Space

Convention 2006 will be held at the Queensbury Convention Centre at Exhibition Park in Regina. The Queensbury has undergone major renovations and expansion in the last year. All meeting rooms are on one floor, and the entire trade show is on one level, as well.

The trade show is expanding and will be able to accommodate larger displays. If there is a type of product or service that you want to see, please let us know and we'll see what we can do to encourage companies to participate.

Convention Timing

The convention will run in a familiar time frame: Sunday afternoon until Wednesday noon. Registration fees will also return to the 2004 rates of \$195 for members and \$225 for non-members, for all registrations received prior to December 16, 2005.

CNT Convention and Tours will coordinate the Partners' Program for the third year in a row. Please let your partner know as they will be sure to want to book when they see the schedule – including a trip to the Temple Garden Spa in Moose Jaw.

The Municipal Awards Ceremony will be held in conjunction with the President's Banquet on Tuesday, Feb. 7th. Nomination forms are posted on the SUMA website.

Your convention planning committee is meeting in June to select many of the speakers and entertainers. Updates will be posted on the SUMA website. Registration information will be sent out in October.



Dance troupe Pavylchenko was one of many highlights at the 2005 Convention.

Centennial Convention an outstanding success

The bills have been paid, the numbers have been crunched, and the result is that the 2005 SUMA Convention in Saskatoon was a success financially, as well as in the programming and entertainment departments. Councillor Terry Alm, Convention Marketing Chair, working closely with the Convention Planning Committee and staff, raised \$100,000 through sponsorships

and ticket sales for keynote speaker Robin Sharma.

"Thanks to Terry's efforts we were able to produce an outstanding convention with so many extras in celebration of our 100th anniversary, and still retain a surplus to contribute towards the association's annual operating budget", said 2005 Convention Chair Councillor Randy Goulden.

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We need your help, not your name

Spring is here and summer is fast approaching. The Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers Board of Directors would like to extend our thoughts to all the residents of rural Saskatchewan for a safe and bountiful seeding season. To each and everyone in our wonderful province to enjoy the wonderful times and opportunities in the "Land of Living Skies" – SASKATCHEWAN.

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

Tisdale Detachment reports during the early morning hours of April 19, 2005 unknown person(s) broke the front window of HI FASHION situated on main street in Tisdale. Once inside the culprits stole a large quantity of jewelry and other miscellaneous items. Further, during the early morning hours of the same date, an attempted Break & Enter took place at BEELAND COOP HOME CENTRE located on 99th Street in Tisdale where the large panes of glass were destroyed. Entry was not gained to the business.

Melfort Detachment reports between April 12 and April 15, 2005 unknown person(s) entered the parking lot of AG-COM TRANSPORT situated across from Melfort Transmission and stole a grain auger motor from a unit that was parked at that location.

Rosetown Detachment reports that on April 12, 2005 culprits broke into a farm residence south east of Harris. Upon gaining entry, the person(s) caused extensive damage to the interior and upon departing stole numerous household items. A vehicle was also stolen from the farmyard when the person(s) departed.

Tisdale Detachment reports between April 3 and April 6, 2005 unknown person(s) entered a private garage situated at Kipabiskau Regional Park and stole 80 – 8'x2"x6" pieces of lumber, 40 – 12'x2"x6" pieces of lumber, three skylights, 2 – 3'x6' windows valued at \$320.00 each, 2 rolls of roof wrap valued at \$80-90 per roll in addition to roof sheeting (aspinite) as well as 3/8" wall sheeting.

Swift Current Detachment reports that during the night of April 12 and the early morning hours of April 13, 2005 unknown culprits entered the CHINOOK GOLF COURSE maintenance yard and moved a garden tractor from the compound. Damage was caused to the #1 golf green. A 10' fiberglass boat was also stolen during the incident.

Rosetown Detachment reports that between the last week of March and the first week of April 2005 counterfeit \$5.00 and \$10.00 bills were surfacing within their community. The bills are described as being slightly smaller in size as compared to the normal bills and that the metallic maple leaves were missing.

Melfort Detachment reports that during the evening of April 2 and the early morning hours of April 3, 2005 a black 1983 Dodge truck located approximately four kilometers west of Kinistino had a side window smashed. Stolen from the truck were a Pioneer cassette player and approximately

60 commercial fish fillets that had been in a locked deep freeze that was in the back of the vehicle. Before the culprits departed, a small fire was set in the cab.

Kindersley Detachment reports between 2:00am and 6:00am on April 27, 2005 unknown person(s) entered HUGGIN's MOTOR PRODUCTS in Kindersley by cutting the chain link fence and then cut the cables that were securing new quads. Stolen were four quads described as:

- 1) 2005 Polaris Sportsman 800 EFI (Black & Red), S# 4XAMH76AX5A617627
 - 2) 2005 Polaris Sportsman 700 EFI (Black & Silver), S# 4XAMH68A35A367803
 - 3) 2005 Polaris Sportsman 700 EFI (Dale Earnhardt Jr. Edition – Red) S# 4AXMH68A15A356542
 - 4) 2005 Polaris Sportsman 500 (Red), S# 4XAMH50A35A612184
- The units were loaded on a trailer. Direction of travel is unknown.

If you have any information on these crimes or have information on the recovered property, 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 cash rewards up to \$2000 if your information solves a crime. Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers uses confidential code numbers when playing cash rewards.

Call **1-800-222-TIPS (8477)**. You can access Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers from your SaskTel Mobility cell phone, toll free at * **TIPS (*8477)**.

You can also submit your tip/information on line at www.saskcrimestoppers.com

Watch for weekly Urban Updates

While Urban Voice takes a bit of a summer break, our electronic Urban Update will keep you informed of events and activities of interest to SUMA members. We'll be sending you Urban Update every Monday during the summer, and year-round.

Thank you

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More support for the New Deal

SUMA continues to work at finalizing New Deal agreements involving the provincial as well as the federal government, intended to channel a share of federal gas tax dollars toward municipal infrastructure. Other advocacy groups specifically support dedicating a portion of the federal gas tax to municipal roads, including the Canadian Taxpayers Federation and, most recently, the Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association.

As uncertainty continues about whether the New Deal commitments in the federal budget will actually be passed and implemented before the next election, the RBHCA in Saskatchewan have recently launched a six-month campaign aimed at increasing both provincial and federal funding for road infrastructure. SUMA is here acknowledging their contribution to the gas tax debate, and their support for the New Deal.



Fix my roads!

Submitted by Ken Burkosky – RBHCA President

Fix my roads! How often have you as municipal leaders heard this complaint on coffee row from the people in your community? Too often.

The Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association of Saskatchewan (RBHCA) has been hearing this too, and we decided that senior levels of government need to have their feet put to the fire when it comes to investing in infrastructure in the province.

As municipalities well know, the level of infrastructure investment from the federal and provincial governments is not keeping pace with the critical need in every city, town and village in the province, and that includes our road network.

The RBHCA has launched a major awareness campaign called “Fix my roads!” The campaign will include a postcard for drivers to mail to the Premier, radio advertising and a campaign website at www.fixmyroads.com. The campaign is not just about highways, it is about the entire Saskatchewan road network – including municipal roads.

The RBHCA recognizes that our road network is a critical component of the ongoing and future economic prosperity of Saskatchewan communities. Having a quality road network is a key factor in attracting and maintaining economic development and should not be solely the responsibility of local taxpayers.

The RBHCA supports a “New Deal” for municipalities that would see increased financial capacity to deal with the infrastructure issues...

This year, the provincial government will collect \$365 million dollars in fuel tax from all sources. The Department of Highways budget is only \$300 million dollars. Of that, only \$264 million will actually go into roads. The RBHCA is asking the question: Why is gas tax filling holes in the budget rather than holes in the road? On the federal side, Ottawa collects \$188 million in fuel tax from Saskatchewan drivers but does not come close to returning that amount into the road network. However, we are pleased to see plans for five cents of the federal fuel tax to be returned to municipalities. The RBHCA supports a “New Deal” for municipalities that would see

increased financial capacity to deal with the infrastructure issues that every community in this province is facing.

As the “Fix my roads!” campaign continues throughout the summer driving season and into the fall, we welcome the support of municipalities and you as municipal leaders. Specifically, we are looking to gather first hand accounts of the road conditions and the impact they are having on municipalities and businesses in communities. We will collect this information and present it to Premier Lorne Calvert. Log on to www.fixmyroads.com and tell us how road conditions are impacting your community.

MARITIMES

2 ITINERARIES

All Coach
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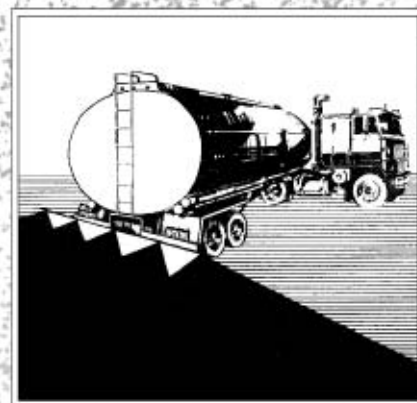


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SUMA spring regional meetings

The SUMA Spring Roadshow kicked off on May 10th as delegates from the South West Region convened in Swift Current. Discussion centered around the New Deal, Revenue Sharing Reform, SUMA's potential partnership with SaskTel to offer Shared Services, and issues effecting the Region.

The next stop had the SUMA team in Wilkie, where expressions of concern abounded regarding the New Deal as the not-then-passed Federal Budget hung in limbo. To address these concerns, Todd MacKay from MP Gerry Ritz's office traveled out and shared the Conservative Party of Canada's stance on Gas Tax sharing. In addition, SARM Director Deb Gronning discussed the Clearing the Path initiative.

Always a lively discussion in the North East, the Glaslyn meeting featured a visit from Sergeant Jerome Engel from the Saskatoon Integrated Drug Unit who gave his highly effective presentation on Crystal Meth. Although some delegates may have seen the presentation at SUMA's Fall Policing Seminar last September, the magnitude of the destruction that accompanies Crystal Meth makes this presentation captivating for all in attendance.

The North East meeting was held in Candle Lake, where along with the SUMA staff presentations, Brian Cobb from Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers discussed the community benefits of the program. Cobb reminded delegates of the SUMA resolution at the 2005 Convention that recommended all communities join Crime Stoppers with a voluntary levy to a maximum of \$200.00.

Kipling played host to the South East regional meeting where SARM President Neal Hardy paid a visit to discuss Clearing the Path. In addition, SUMA's Senior Policy Analyst Merv Norton was on hand to discuss the final report from the Action Committee on the Rural Economy.

The East Central meeting was held in Preeceville where Gus Fitzelmeyer from Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management discussed the requirements to be designated as a Certified Water System operator. This was the final meeting before the Central Region's meeting on June 22nd.

At every meeting, breakout or plenary sessions were held to discuss issues that were affecting the respective region. Issues ranged from school board



amalgamations to the viability of rural Saskatchewan to the health issues surrounding the burning of flax straw. SUMA's Executive, Directors, and staff will be discussing all issues brought forward at the June Board meeting.

And finally, the sad news was delivered at each meeting that

this will indeed be the final Regional Roadshow for SUMA's long-time serving Executive Director, Keith Schneider. Keith has served in this capacity for over 13 years and has opted to try his hand at some small scale farming. Best of luck Keith!

New face at the SUMA office

We are pleased to welcome Tauna Caswell to SUMA as our Group Benefits Administrative Assistant. Tauna brings over four years of related experience to this position, which became available when Shauna Steffensen was promoted to the position of Coordinator of Insurance Services.

There's one other change to report. Shantel Lipp has transferred from group insurance to the position of Events Coordinator. All three look forward to assisting you in the areas they deal with.

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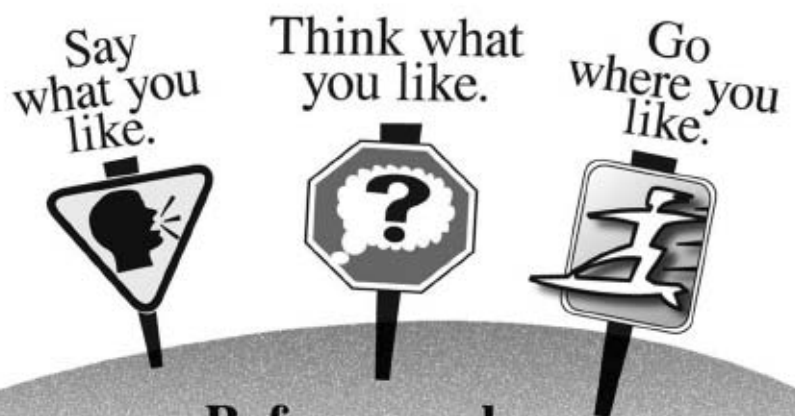
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