

Deal or no deal?



Deputy Premier Ken Krawetz attended the SUMA board meeting on December 11 on behalf of Premier Brad Wall to clarify the provincial government's statements that Municipal Operating Grants might be frozen at last year's level. Minister Krawetz reiterated the Premier's apology to Saskatchewan's municipal leaders over the way the issue was handled - mentioned to the media without prior consultation with municipalities.

Krawetz acknowledged that there should have been "direct communication" between the government and municipal officials about the potential changes. SUMA requested a meeting with Premier Wall for January to further discuss this issue.

SUMA is encouraged that the Premier sent letters to local elected officials across the province, committing that his government will fully implement the MOG formula by the end of its current term. This means that in

the province's 2011-12 budget, municipalities should see the equivalent of one full point of PST revenue transferred through MOG, a promise originally intended to be met in the 2010-11 budget.

SUMA acknowledges the difficult fiscal situation the province faces, and believes that a full and complete discussion between partners is needed. Perhaps, by working together, the province and municipalities can find a solution that meets the interests of all parties.

The MOG formula was an agreement between the province and the municipal sector, with the province participating as a full partner in the MOG negotiations. MOG is a transfer of funds from the province to municipalities to pay for the province's share of municipal responsibilities in the following areas: policing, transportation, recreation, community development and economic development.

The provincial cabinet chose PST as an appropriate economic indicator, and selected the equivalent of one full point of PST as the right dollar figure to represent the provincial share of municipal costs. MOG amounts are based on the PST revenue from two years ago, so in 2009-10, the MOG allocation was based on PST from 2007-08, and in 2010-11 it is supposed to be taken from 2008-09 PST. This means that the province has already collected the money owed to

municipalities through MOG for next year.

As part of the historic MOG agreement, municipalities agreed that they would share in the good times and the tough times. As PST revenue fluctuates, so will the MOG money – meaning that as PST goes up, MOG will go up, and as PST goes down, MOG will go down. The proposal to freeze MOG actually means municipalities will feel the economic pain twice, once now when it is frozen and once again when the depressed PST numbers from this year are reflected in the MOG formula.

The reason that it is important that municipalities get what they're owed in MOG payments this year is because if the province doesn't pay its share this year then municipalities will be forced to make up the budgetary shortfall. This will have to be made up through a combination of tax increases and cuts and/or delays to programs and services.

In effect, by talking about freezing MOG, the province is asking municipalities to make the hard decision about which of the vital program areas.

In the end, it is our communities and our future that will suffer as the long-term consequences of one year of underfunding will be felt for many years to come.

Understanding local governments

The complexity of local government operations is not always well understood. As we often say among ourselves, "people take municipal services for granted".

At some point we all have dealt with strange questions from friends and relatives regarding certain aspects of the work we do as municipal employees, or heard the misguided comments of reporters regarding perceived inefficiencies in our municipal operations. For most individuals, there is minimal understanding of how potable water gets into their home and the amount of infrastructure required for processing and distributing that water. Some taxpayers do not understand the level of expertise required to ensure that their drinking water is of the best quality possible. Such topics are interesting ones to explore with people who question the cost of municipal services.

It can be very interesting to explain, for example, that on average, each individual generates as much as 80 to 100 gallons of used water per day, and yet it is the mandate of municipal government to release this sanitary water into the environment without any impact on nature. The purpose of the exercise is to demonstrate that the compounded needs of each resident can cumulatively amount to significant challenges for local governments. (Continued on page 2)

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We're gearing up! Only weeks remain until elected officials and administrators gather in Regina for SUMA's 105th Annual Convention. For our newly elected members who will be attending our convention for the first time, prepare yourself for an action-packed series of days. The SUMA Convention features over 1,000 delegates who gather to discuss various issues that impact the municipal sector, particularly through policy directions that are adopted on the convention floor. It's your opportunity to learn, debate and make decisions on matters of common interest. We look forward to the contributions of each of our delegates, as the discourse at our Convention helps to reinforce our accountability to the electorate and our strength as a unified organization.

This year's education sessions are tailored to address needs of our municipalities on a wide range of topics, including crime prevention, regional waste management and environmental liability. Sector-specific breakout sessions will assist our Board of Directors in formulating and prioritizing SUMA's lobbying strategies, and our Plenary session will focus on innovative approaches to infrastructure.

Our Convention Trade Show is one of the largest of its kind in Western Canada. Our intent is to connect our municipal representatives with those who supply products and services that municipalities use each day, so be sure to set some time aside to attend the Trade Show.

It's ironic that this year's Convention theme – Building Momentum – was chosen because it speaks to the momentum that our cities, towns and villages have been able to gain as a result of the Municipal Operating Grant (MOG) agreement with the Province. Certainly, that's the way it looked when we chose this theme, but what a difference a few months can make.

At this time, the municipal sector faces a great deal of uncertainty as it relates to MOG because of the province's fiscal situation. A revenue shortfall will create significant challenges for municipal governments nearly finished budgeting for 2010. We will continue to advocate on behalf of our members to ensure that our cities, towns and villages get what is owed to them.

As 2009 draws to a close, I want to wish you all the best of the season, and a happy and healthy 2010. See you in Regina!

Allan Earle
President Allan Earle

Understanding Local Governments (Continued from page 1)



The lack of understanding of municipal operations is not only limited to the people we serve. Often, people whose responsibility it is to support local governments also struggle to understand how municipalities operate. I can recall one of my first meetings with a former Deputy Minister, when he suggested to a group of city managers that urban municipalities really did not have any substantiated needs for revenue sharing given that, based on his examination of financial reports, no municipalities in the province had experienced operating deficits. From his vantage point, having spent his entire professional career within provincial government, this seemed to be a sound conclusion. However, his lack of understanding of the basic statutory requirements for municipalities to balance their expenditures with their revenues clearly put him at a disadvantage in that discussion. City managers were quick to point out his lack of understanding and their level of frustration with the meeting. I felt similar frustrations recently when SUMA received a call from a federal government employee, inquiring as to whether there were other cities in Saskatchewan, aside from Winnipeg.

As civil servants working in leadership positions, city managers, municipal administrators and operations managers have the purview on a broad range of operations, all of which have a significant impact on the quality of life of the residents they serve. While it is incumbent upon them to deliver these services within targeted efficiency levels and quality assurance standards, the responsibility to educate the public about the value of these services is shared equally with their elected officials.

Mayors and councilors who define the policy framework around the delivery of municipal services are often heard speaking about the challenges their communities face with respect to infrastructure replacement and urban growth. It is equally important for taxpayers to hear about the ongoing successes of their municipalities delivering an extensive array of reliable quality services, including: police and fire protection, water and sanitary services, waste management, road maintenance and traffic management, public transit and para-transit, parks and leisure programs, planning and engineering services, economic development, tourism and event planning.

Laurent Mougeot
CEO Laurent Mougeot

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Vice-President, Cities

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Vice-President, Towns

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MOG concerns dominate Board meeting

The SUMA Board of Directors met December 11-12 in Regina for their final meeting of 2009. The agenda for the two-day session consisted of a number of important policy items, decisions regarding the 2010 convention, board external and internal committee appointments, an auditor's report and a 2010 operating budget update. Overshadowing the meeting, though, were concerns over changes to the Municipal Operating Grant (MOG) program.

Deputy Premier Ken Krawetz met with the SUMA board and apologized for the fact that municipalities were not consulted prior to this issue being raised in the media. SUMA expressed its disappointment, stating that changes to MOG would undermine a landmark agreement reached only one year ago, and threaten a constructive government-to-government relationship. Changes would also place \$54 Million in funding at risk, money that the province owes to municipalities for providing services on their behalf.

The meeting was a positive opportunity for all perspectives to be heard, and Deputy Premier Krawetz stressed the value that the province places on its relationship with municipalities. SUMA has requested a meeting with the Premier to further discuss this issue.

On policy-related matters, the board approved two policy positions - one related to regional airports, the other affordable housing. These statements can be viewed on the SUMA website at www.suma.org under 'Issues'.

Through the Regional Airport Policy, SUMA urges the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure to continue the Community Airport Partnership Program after March 2010. The policy also urges the Ministry to work with municipalities on developing a long-term, stable, multi-year funding formula on capital infrastructure for regional airports in Saskatchewan.

The Affordable Housing Policy supports the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' efforts to establish a national comprehensive strategy on housing. The statement also recommends that the provincial government work with the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation and municipalities to develop a comprehensive housing strategy.

Other topics on the agenda at the board standing committees included a discussion on the third round of consultations on the Environmental Regulatory Review (see page 6), update on the Urban Highway Connector Program, and 2010 convention resolutions (see page 4).

Saskatchewan Emergency Planners Association (SEPA) made a presentation to the Protective Services Committee meeting, and suggested that SEPA meet with the committee on an annual basis. The committee was also briefed on the recent public safety radio system announcement.

The Convention Planning Committee received an update from the SUMA administration on progress toward the 2010 Convention, including a discussion on SUMA Award nominees, sponsorship and trade show.

The Corporate Services Committee was presented with proposals on the 2010/2011 Host Hotel Program and a decision will be announced shortly.

The Environment Committee was briefed on proposed changes to provincial environmental regulations, water management in Saskatchewan and an update on the Bridge Funding for Municipal Recycling Program. The committee made a motion to send a letter to the Minister of Environment, urging her to provide additional bridge funding until the full implementation of the Multi-Material Recycling Program is in place in 2011.

The committee also agreed to invite Wayne Dybvig, VP of Operations from the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority to present at the March 2010 board meeting.

SUMA Board welcomes newest members

Councillor Dawn Luhning Director - City of Moose Jaw



Dawn is currently serving her third term on Moose Jaw City Council and is excited to be back at the SUMA table as Moose Jaw's representative. She has a Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Saskatchewan and is currently an Insurance Advisor affiliated with Partners In Planning. She has been self-employed and working with her clients for 12 years.

Dawn is an avid runner and sports-addict - baseball and football especially. She is involved in many community initiatives and organizes the Moose Jaw, Charity Road each year on Canada Day to support the Moose Jaw Health Foundation, with proceeds going directly to the local hospital. Her past and current committees with the city include: Business Improvement District; 2010 Saskatchewan Winter Games host committee; Moose Jaw Cultural Centre; and Economic Development Commission.

Dawn is looking forward to working with her colleagues on SUMA to bring one voice to the issues that face all municipalities. She believes that together, we can make a stronger economic future for our province.

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Councillor Chris Wyatt Director - City of Yorkton



Councillor Chris Wyatt has represented Yorkton residents on City Council for the past nine years, having served the last municipal term as city Mayor. During his time on council, his main priority has been prudent spending. He points to Yorkton's new water treatment plant and new fire hall as evidence of projects that were delivered on budget.

Councillor Wyatt is proud of local infrastructure investments that are helping to support Yorkton's growth, including road improvements, water and sewer line replacements and newer, safer sidewalks. He is also pleased with the work that council has done to address local safety concerns, including the recruitment of additional police officers.

Work continues in various areas to accommodate a growing local economy. Councillor Wyatt believes that with proper planning, provincial and federal support and local fundraising, there will be even more exciting projects in Yorkton - the city *Where Good Things Happen*.

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Mayor Paul Topola Director - Southwest Region



Mayor Paul Topola is currently serving his second term as mayor of the Town of Assiniboia, having served on council since 1997. He sits on numerous boards, is chairperson of the South Country Health Care Foundation and newly elected co-chair of the South Central Municipal Organization. He also presides as chair of the Assiniboia & District Doctor Recruitment Committee and is past chairperson of the Assiniboia Economic Development Authority.

Although Mayor Topola understands the importance of every aspect of community involvement, his key interest areas are health care, education and community economic development.

He was born and raised in Assiniboia, and except for a few years away for school and work, has owned and operated a variety of businesses in that community. He and his wife, Diane currently own a trophy and awards shop and a specialty food store in Assiniboia. Diane is a Registered Nurse who is working as a home care nurse. The two have two grown sons, Christopher and Matthew.

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Councillor Ted Zurakowski Director - City of Prince Albert



Ted Zurakowski is a Prince Albert City Councillor, representing Ward 8 in the city. He was appointed to the SUMA Board by Prince Albert City Council in November 2009.

Soon after marrying a girl from the West Hill area of Prince Albert, Councillor Zurakowski quickly became involved in the excitement of raising a young family in Prince Albert. He was first elected as a City Councillor in 2006, and was acclaimed in 2009 to once again represent the residents of Prince Albert. He is currently teaching for the Prince Albert Separate School Division.

Councillor Zurakowski currently participates on a number of boards and committees in various capacities including: Executive Committee; John M. Cuelenaere Library Board Chair; Housing Advisory Committee Chair; Alfred Jenkins Field House Chair; Prince Albert Police Commission; Community Services Advisory Committee; Wapiti Regional Library Board and the Prince Albert Golf & Curling Club Board.

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Building Momentum

SUMA Convention - January 31 - February 3, 2010

Resolutions

The SUMA convention is an opportunity for municipal leaders from around the province to come together and engage in meaningful debate regarding matters affecting urban municipalities.

Prior to each convention, municipalities are encouraged to submit resolutions on issues that they would like to be discussed on the convention floor. The SUMA Resolutions Committee, which is a standing committee of the Board, approved resolutions for the upcoming convention at the December 11 meeting. All municipalities will receive the final list of approved resolutions prior to the convention, and resolutions will also be posted to the SUMA website at www.suma.org

The 2010 convention will see 16 resolutions presented to the membership. Topics include improved cell phone coverage for northern residents, a requirement to register all terrain vehicles, extending Workers' Compensation Board benefits to volunteer firefighters and creating a sustainable water source for South Central Saskatchewan.

Resolution debate is important because it provides guidance to the SUMA board on various policy matters. Resolutions adopted at the convention will help to formulate the policy positions of SUMA, and therefore, it is important that delegates read the resolution package before convention. It is recommended that councils discuss these issues prior to the convention, with delegates coming to convention prepared to engage in respectful debate on the issues.

SUMA Executive elections

Monday, February 1 at 11:45 a.m. (President)

Tuesday February 2 at 10:15 a.m. (Vice-Presidents)

SUMA's Chief Electoral Officer is now accepting nominations for the following SUMA Executive Committee positions:

- President
- Vice-President of Cities
- Vice-President of Towns
- Vice-President of Villages/Resort Villages/Northern Municipalities

Voting eligibility

Each elected official representing a SUMA member municipality who is in attendance at the SUMA Annual Convention and who has registered as a convention delegate shall be eligible to cast one ballot in the election of President and one ballot for their respective sector Vice-President.

Additional information, including nomination forms are available on the SUMA website – visit www.suma.org under the 'Events' tab. Note that additional candidate information will be posted as it becomes available.

Breakout & Plenary Sessions

Monday, February 1

B1 - Roundtable: Challenges facing City Fire and Police Services

Protective Services can account for a large component of municipal operating budgets, and changes to provincial legislation and funding will have a significant impact on municipalities. This session will provide an opportunity to discuss challenges with each other and provincial government representatives.

B2 - Learning to Govern: Leading Your Municipality

Many municipal councils struggle with decisions on how to effectively delegate and oversee the work of administration. The result is that council often spends a great deal of time dealing with operational decisions and 'putting out fires'. This session will look at examples of municipalities that have adopted effective governance practices, and what it has meant for them.

B3 - Bylaw Development: Using Your Powers Wisely

Does your municipality have bylaws that aren't being enforced? Do you have bylaws that should be council resolutions instead, or resolutions that should be bylaws? This session will address when to use your bylaw powers, and where to look for help.

Education Sessions

Sunday, January 31 - 1 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

E1 - Changes to Municipal Financial Statements*

In preparation for 2009 financial reporting, this session will serve as a review for administrators of the changes presented at the October workshops. We recommend that staff responsible for financial reporting attend. Note that this session is not intended for council members. (*delivered twice – see E10)

E2 - Environmental Liability for the Public Sector

Municipalities manage a wide range of environmental exposures, including landfills, recycling facilities, waste/wastewater treatment facilities, storm water systems and storage tanks. This session will focus on identifying, reducing, managing and transferring risks.

E3 - Regional Waste Management: How Are You Taking Out Your Garbage?

This session will explore regional waste management systems in Saskatchewan, and examine why the regional structure might be right for your municipality.

E4 - Models for Delivering Health Care in Small Urban Centres

Communities are struggling with ways to recruit and retain health care professionals. This session will feature an open discussion on a variety of health care models for small urban centres.

E5 - Dealing with Developers: What You Need to Know

As a result of increased housing and commercial developments, municipalities must be aware of the associated responsibilities, and what they can request from developers to ensure that due process is followed. This session will help to answer the question: How do we get the best deal for our community?

2:30 p.m. - 3:45 p.m.

E6 - Tax Collection and Enforcement

Many municipalities find it challenging to collect taxes levied on residents, but failing to collect taxes creates an unfair burden. This session will explore tax collection strategies, as well as effective enforcement procedures.

E7 - Strategies to Control Rodent Populations

Rodents can be a huge problem for urban municipalities. Attendees will have the opportunity to hear about tools to prevent, control and eliminate pests.

E8 - Crime Prevention: Tools to Keep Your Community Safe

From break and enters to large scale grow operations, crime is an issue in Saskatchewan communities. Representatives from the RCMP and municipal police forces will examine criminal activity and crime prevention strategies.

E9 - Ready for Change: How Adaptable is Your Municipality To Climate Change?

The pace of climate change is expected to accelerate. This session will focus on the impacts of climate change - particularly on water - and on management options to deal with climate change.

E10 - Changes to Municipal Financial Statements* (see E1 description)

Need more convention information?

Visit us online at www.suma.org, under 'Events'
Phone our office at 306-525-3727
Email us at suma@suma.org

Gearing up for our best convention ever!

Keynote Address

Monday, February 1

Born and raised in Saskatchewan, Gavin Semple's story is that of home-grown success.

Mr. Semple is the CEO of the Brandt Group of Companies - Saskatchewan's largest privately held company. Under his leadership, Brandt has won several prestigious awards, including the designation of one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies. Mr. Semple is also the Deputy Chair for Enterprise Saskatchewan.



You'll hear the Brandt story, and learn how a small Saskatchewan company evolved to become world class. You'll be inspired by his take on leadership, the Saskatchewan economy and hear his thoughts on how we can keep building the momentum.

SUMA Trade Show

Monday, February 1 - 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Tuesday, February 2 - 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

One of the largest trade shows of its kind in Canada, the trade show will feature 150 booths with products and services that municipalities use each day.

A number of SUMA Advantage partners also participate, so stop by, learn about their products and services and also about the great deals available through our SUMA Advantage partners.

The trade show will be of particular interest to your town foreman, senior purchasing staff and public works staff.

Please note that agenda time will be dedicated to trade show viewing on both days.



Help us to host a greener convention!

SUMA is committed to recycling and reducing waste wherever possible, as are the majority of our members. We are conscious of the effect our Convention has on the environment and will strive to minimize its impact. We encourage our delegates to join the effort by:

- Bringing your favourite travel mug or water bottle to Convention. Ceramic mugs for coffee and tea and glasses for water will be used at the refreshment stations
- Hopping on one of our shuttle buses, or car pooling with your colleagues
- Using the clearly identified recycling bins located throughout Queensbury for your plastic drink bottles

We thank you for your participation, and for recognizing that reducing waste and practicing good recycling behavior is everyone's responsibility!



Social Activities

Fun and frivolity await you at the 2010 SUMA Convention!

An Evening at the RCMP Heritage Centre

Sunday, January 31

Since opening its doors in 2007, this magnificent facility has become a major tourist attraction for Regina and Saskatchewan. Learn the story of the RCMP through state of the art exhibits and mingle with your fellow delegates. Appetizers will be served. **Please note that supper will not be served at this event.**

Board-hosted hospitality night

Monday, February 1

It's become a convention tradition! Join your SUMA Board of Directors at the Regina Inn for an evening that provides a chance to catch up with old friends, and make some new ones, too.

Partners' Program

Monday, February 1 & Tuesday, February 2

The Partners' Program will feature a range of activities for spouses of convention attendees. Highlights will include tours of the Saskatchewan Legislature, the Lajord Hutterite Colony, belly dancing, and a special behind the scenes tour of CTV Television.

President's Banquet

Tuesday, February 2

Held at the Queensbury Convention Centre, the President's Banquet honours long-serving elected officials and municipal employees for dedication to their municipality.

Following the awards program, you will be entertained by Derek Edwards - the hottest comedy property in Canada. He's an ordinary working guy, and his comedic gift is making the ordinary extraordinary.



Event tickets

You may purchase tickets on-site for An Evening at the RCMP Heritage Centre on Sunday, January 31st and the President's Banquet on Tuesday, February 2nd. However, it is best to purchase these tickets in advance as only a limited number of tickets are available and are on a first come, first serve basis.

You will not be able to purchase the Sunday event tickets on-site, so be sure to purchase prior to arriving at the convention. If the President's Banquet is not sold out, then tickets will be sold on-site until Monday, February 1st at noon.

If you purchase tickets for either event and are not able to attend, then it will be your responsibility to re-sell these tickets. SUMA will assist with the process up until Wednesday, January 27th and will maintain a list of those looking to sell or buy tickets. After this date, we will provide a for sale/wanted board on-site at the convention office for those wishing to sell or buy tickets. These ticket sales will be handled by the delegate without SUMA's involvement.

Province updates environmental regulations

Saskatchewan is adopting a new, results-based model for environmental regulation.

SUMA has been engaged since the process began in 2008 when the Ministry of Environment launched the comprehensive review of environmental regulations. The process has involved multiple rounds of consultations, with opportunities for input and feedback on the direction proposed by the Ministry.

SUMA participated in the latest round of consultation in November, which focused on the proposed amendments to the *Environmental Management and Protection Act (EMPA) 2002*, the *Environmental Assessment Act* and the *Forest Resources Management Act (FRMA)*. Environment Minister Nancy Heppner introduced these amendments in the Legislature in late November, through the proposed *Environmental Management and Protection Act 2009*.

SUMA has been watching the changes to the legislation very carefully and has summarized the amendments into the following key points:

The proposed amendments include the creation of a Saskatchewan Environmental Code (SEC), along with an Advisory Committee to advise the Minister on the contents of that Code

- The Code is a key element of the new results-based model. The SEC will be developed to clearly state environmental policy, set objectives, principles and prescriptive rules.
- The membership of the Advisory Committee is yet to be finalized. SUMA asked Minister Heppner to be included on the committee, and it appears that SUMA will be on the preliminary working Advisory Committee.

Enhancement of the current permit process

- The SEC and environmental protection plan will replace the existing detailed permit requirements for medium-and low-risk activities. Permits will still be required for initiatives considered to be high-risk, such as water treatment plants. The Ministry will specify categories of activities in the SEC.

Improvement to the Environmentally Impacted Sites legislation, with a proposed Orphaned Environmentally Impacted Site Fund

- The amendments are a positive step for municipalities. The objective of the Ministry is to create an enabling policy environment for redevelopment of contaminated sites.
- The new legislation should remove obstacles that had previously prevented redevelopment. Furthermore, SUMA was pleased to learn that a fund has been proposed to facilitate remediation. More information is still required as to the priority that abandoned service stations will have in funding allocations from this fund.

Development of Qualified Person definitions and categories

- Under the new results-based model, qualified persons will be used to certify projects based on standards set out in the SEC. A definition for qualified persons will be included in the development of the Code.
- Changes to the definition of qualified persons should not impact existing staff, such as certified water and wastewater operators, who will be grandfathered.

Changes to water governance

- The Ministry is looking to eliminate permit requirements for building waterworks systems serving 5000 people or more. For such projects, an environmental protection plan will still have to be developed and certified by a qualified person.
- Building waterworks systems serving 5000 people or less will still require a permit.

Modernize waste minimization program and improve recycling

- The new changes will allow the Minister to create new stewardship programs, similar to SWEEP, scrap tire recycling, etc. This has potential to expand recycling programs in Saskatchewan and enhance recycling operations for municipalities.

Overall, SUMA enjoys a very close working relationship with the Ministry of Environment and have had several opportunities to communicate our perspective directly to Minister Heppner and her staff. We very much appreciate the Ministry's continued commitment to engage with us throughout this review and look forward to working with the Ministry to ensure that any changes will meet the needs of municipalities and respect municipal capacity and jurisdictional challenges.

For more information on the results-based regulations visit: www.environment.gov.sk.ca/regulations

Creative communities invest in culture.

Find out more about cultural mapping and planning by visiting www.saskculture.sk.ca or by calling (306) 780-9284.

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Time for the province to act on water management

The provincial government described water as "our most important natural resource" in the October Speech from the Throne. An abundant supply of safe, clean water was identified as a priority, with the government pledging to present a comprehensive water management plan during the fall legislative session. The aim is to work toward "security of supply for residential and commercial uses."

Encouraging news indeed, although this is certainly not the first time the province has promised action on water management. The province has developed many strategies over the years (see below). While improvements have been made, particularly related to drinking water safety and standards, complex issues remain. Demand for water is on the rise. Some communities, particularly in the south central region of the province, have experienced water shortages. And, of course, the impacts of climate change on the water supply in the future are yet to be determined.

Water management is an emerging concern for many Saskatchewan municipalities. Responsible for managing local distribution systems, Saskatchewan cities, towns and villages are important stakeholders when it comes to water management.

Water management strategies: a timeline

- In 1999, the provincial government introduced the Water Management Framework. Developed over a multi-year consultation process with other ministries, municipalities and the public, the key phrase was integrated resource management, the report recommended that water management be developed in connection to other elements in society and the ecosystem.
- In the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority's 2006 Saskatchewan Water Conservation Plan, demand management was cited as a potential solution for water conservation.
- The 2007 Green Strategy restated the intention to develop an integrated water management plan and continue implementation of the water conservation strategy.
- This brings us to 2009, with the province again announcing intentions to develop a comprehensive water management plan.

The challenge is that despite the numerous strategies, little action has been taken. Today, Saskatchewan end-point users face the same long-term challenges regarding water supply that were present a decade ago.

What can we do?

SUMA supports a strategic, transparent approach to water management. We are concerned that since the Throne Speech, very little information has been available regarding the water management plan. Municipalities have an important role to play in the implementation of any water management strategy and so should be engaged by the province throughout its development.



SUMA believes that this is an excellent opportunity for the provincial government to demonstrate leadership and provide clear policy direction on this matter. The time for action is now.

We will continue to engage with the provincial government on this topic and insist on a key role for municipalities in the development of this strategy. If water is an issue of importance to your municipality, we encourage you to let us know. Provide us with your comments and thoughts on what the new plan should include. You can contact Che-Wei Chung, SUMA Policy Advisor, at cchung@suma.org or 306-525-4389.

Water in Saskatchewan ... Did you know?

The word 'Saskatchewan' comes from the Cree word, "Kisiskatchewan" – which means "the river that flows swiftly".

Our major river systems include the North and South Saskatchewan rivers, the Assiniboine and Churchill Rivers, all of which flow into the Hudson Bay.

One-eighth of Saskatchewan is covered by water.

Skilled Canadian Workers Available Coming to a town near you

Providing Quality, Productive
Canadian Workers to Help
Build Your Community

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*"TDT Crews has helped increase our productivity
and have had a positive economic and social impact
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Exploring the issues at the Municipal Forum

SUMA participated in the Municipal Forum at the Legislature on Friday, November 13. The Municipal Forum is a twice yearly meeting between the executives of SUMA and the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM), and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Accompanying SUMA were representatives from the City Mayors' Caucus. The intent of the Forum is to allow for discussions between provincial and municipal elected officials on topics of mutual interest. The Forum is also one of the approving and directing bodies for the Municipal Sector Strategic Plan (MSSP).

The Forum is an important opportunity for dialogue between elected officials. Often, when topics relevant to the portfolios of particular Cabinet ministers are on the Forum agenda, those ministers attend. At this particular Forum, that did not happen, the result being that the intent of the Forum and the constructiveness of its dialogue were weakened. Both SUMA and SARM expressed hope that this would not be the case in the future.

Below are discussion summaries and outcomes for each agenda item:

Affordable housing

Keith Hanson, newly appointed Chair of the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation (SHC), spoke to changes in the SHC legislation and board composition. The SHC is about to undertake an overall provincial assessment on housing needs and look at what is required for sustainability. Local and provincial regulations also must be reviewed. Hanson reported that 22 of the 36 Task Force on Affordable Housing recommendations are complete or acted upon. Work on the remaining recommendations continues.

SUMA noted the importance of having a provincial strategy and funding in place to deliver sufficient quantities and quality of affordable housing units.

Multi-Material Recycling Program

Sam Ferris, Executive Director of the Municipal Branch with the Ministry of Environment outlined the existing bridge funding program and noted the province is working on details of a MMRP for late 2010 or early 2011, and that the province recognizes the importance of this issue.

SUMA summarized its position - that the bridge funding support was essential to sustaining municipal recyclers over the last year and that it must be continued until the MMRP is fully implemented.

Facilitating growth

Municipal Affairs staff highlighted that issues with growth management are broad and complex. They provided an overview of the growth in subdivisions in the last few years, with focus on cities, city regions, satellite communities and resort areas.

Municipal Sector Strategic Plan (MSSP)

Municipal Affairs provided an update on MSSP progress to-date, priorities, and possible future directions. Discussion ensued about succession planning for administrators.

SUMA noted that municipal associations in other provinces have expressed interest in the MSSP and the government-to-government relationship it has enabled between municipalities and the province.

Infrastructure funding

Kyle Toffan, Grants Administration Director with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs provided a summary of funding amounts and projects on a program-by-program basis.

Municipal Capacity Development Program

MCDP Program Manager Shelley Kilbride provided an update on the services and activities of the program.

SUMA asked if there is a way to integrate the program's work with that of the watershed authorities. The MCDP will make sure to include any active watershed implementation/stewardship groups in their stakeholder identification process with inter-municipal working groups.

Enhancing voluntary restructuring options

Municipal Affairs reviewed the Rural/Urban Governance Working Group proposal and proposed that the Forum partners (SUMA, SARM, and Municipal Affairs) work together to develop recommendations for changes to legislative authorities and funding options for the possibility of creating new municipal structures.

SUMA and SARM commented that more resources are needed for this work.

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Mar. 11	Lagoon Operation and Maintenance (0.6 CEU's) New!
Mar. 24	Filter Surveillance and Optimization (0.6 CEU's) <small>(formerly called "Filter Maintenance and Surveillance")</small>
Mar. 25	Iron & Manganese Removal (0.6 CEU's)
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Municipal Information Dataportal (MID) launched

Municipal Affairs recently launched the Municipal Information Dataportal (MID) as part of the ministry's website. This is the start of a phased approach to bring together and make information related to Saskatchewan municipalities available in one location.

The objective of MID is to provide better access to a range of municipal information. It will support government business needs and decision-making with respect to municipalities. MID will also serve the municipal sector and the public by improving knowledge, transparency and understanding of the municipal sector.

To access MID, visit www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mid

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs is interested in hearing about other weblinks related to Saskatchewan municipalities that could be added to the MID website. If you would like to share those websites with us or have any comments on MID, please contact us at muninfo@gov.sk.ca.

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Making Contracts Work

Assuring Quality and Accountability for Municipalities, By Municipal Capacity Development Program Staff

At one time or another, each municipality has contracted the private sector to complete work on public sector infrastructure and/or to provide local services. Some of these municipalities have experienced quick delivery times, quality workmanship and reasonable costs, while others have had a less than satisfying experience. Knowing what you require and communicating this effectively prior to entering into a contract will result in an effective partnership and a quality product.

A lack of knowledge on the details of a project or on the fees for service can contribute to misunderstandings and result in poor quality work that does not meet the needs of the municipality. Prior to developing a Request For Proposals, the municipal administration, council and/or engaged community members should research the project thoroughly, assess the fair market value for related services, and identify and contact local organizations with relevant mandates.

Researching those companies and organizations specializing in related work can also help you gain a more comprehensive understanding of what is currently available in the market. Inquire about their fees and rates, and make sure that they outline what services are included with those fees. You may find that a fee that seems reasonable at first only provides a minimal level of service and may not include related supply costs.

Often you will find that the experiences of other municipalities and the advice that they can provide is invaluable and will save you a lot of time and resources. Contact municipalities who have undertaken a similar project and inquire about any organizations that provide related assistance, companies and private consultants available to carry out the work, the services that they were provided under contract, the costs that they incurred to complete the project and any tips to help you move your project forward.

Once you've researched your options it is time to prepare a comprehensive Request For Proposal (RFP). An RFP is used to advertise a service required by a municipality. The RFP is the municipality's first interaction with the consultant/contractor, it must clearly communicate the nature of the project and the expectations for the proposal. Essentially, it sets out what information the municipality requires to make an informed decision on who they will hire.

In advance of receiving the RFPs, the municipality should create a list of criteria that they will use to evaluate the proposals. This helps to save time and provides a consistent basis for the evaluation and ranking of proposals. Also, if consultants want to know why they were not successful, it provides a useful tool to discuss the shortfalls of their proposal. Once a consultant has been chosen, the municipality must develop a terms of reference (TOR) for service.

The TOR are the terms the consultant must adhere to in providing the service required. Key components of the RFP serve as a basis for the TOR, but they will be expanded, refined and adapted to the specific consultant

selected. The TOR should include the scope of the project, the details of the work to be completed, a detailed description of the final product, and costs and timelines for each component of the work. As the costs of materials tend to fluctuate over the duration of a project, it is also important to outline who will be responsible for incurring any increased costs within the TOR.

One of the most important components of the TOR is consequence clause, which defines what will happen in the event that the work is not completed as agreed. This clause generally provides the opportunity for each party to withdraw from the project with adequate notice and protects the municipality against payment if work is not completed to standard, within the set timeframes, or for the agreed upon cost. Without this accountability measure included in the TOR the municipality will have little recourse if the work is not completed or is completed unsatisfactorily.

Both the RFP and TOR documents are critical, and help to ensure that municipalities are "getting what they paid for". They work together to clearly outline your requests and the services that the consultant will provide.

The private sector is important to the economy, providing employment within the community and building industry. Following a comprehensive process to involve the private sector in public sector responsibilities and thinking regionally will create a strong relationship for both to continue building partnerships in the future.

Other things to consider:

- Involving other municipalities may provide more assurance that the work will be done on time and that the quality is up to your standard. With a larger client base, the consultant may be motivated to complete the project as outlined.
- Some projects are very expensive and require a large budget. If a project has broader impact, there may be an opportunity to link up with neighbouring municipalities to share in the cost. There are many options on how to receive the most for your money without losing out on quality.
- Research existing organizations that provide services free of charge or at a minimal fee. Consider the level of service that is provided by these organizations and whether they would deliver the work required. Why pay for a service if you can receive the same quality for free?
- Consider hiring someone on a regional basis. Instead of paying a consultant to complete one project, you may be able to hire someone to work under contract for a year to complete multiple projects. One municipality's costs for the service can be decreased if the cost and services is spread amongst a number of municipalities.



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An RFP should include:

- Project background
- An explanation of the scope of the project
- Project timelines
- Guidelines for ongoing communications and progress reports
- Proposal guidelines for the services that the municipality is looking to receive
- Criteria to be used in assessing proposals i.e. previous work and references
- Closing date and contact information

Showcase your community with a Saskatchewan Municipal Award



The Saskatchewan Municipal Awards celebrate the many excellent practices of municipal governments of all sizes serving the residents of Saskatchewan on a daily basis. We invite your municipality to participate in Celebrating Excellence in 2010!

We are now calling for nominations for the 4th Annual Awards. Recipients will be announced at the Saskatchewan Municipal Awards luncheon in Regina in May 2010.

Deadline for nominations is 4 p.m. on Friday, March 19th, 2010. To access the nomination package or for more information visit the SMA website at www.municipalawards.ca or call 306-787-8885.

Municipal Service Excellence

Any municipal practice that enhances the ability of a municipal corporation to deliver services that regularly exceed the expectations of their customers.

Economic Development Leadership

Any municipal practice that demonstrates the municipal corporation's use of strategies to improve the local economic development climate while supporting long-term economic development in Saskatchewan.

Regional Leadership and Partnerships

Any municipal practice that exemplifies efforts to consult and cooperate with other municipalities, non-governmental organizations, community groups, First Nations, other governments, and citizens for the purpose of delivering benefits to citizens.

Community Development Leadership

Any municipal practice that demonstrates the municipal corporation's commitment to building and sustaining a vibrant community and fostering strong community spirit, volunteerism and engaged citizens.

Environmental Stewardship

Any municipal practice that demonstrates the municipal corporation's work as a steward of the environment, or the municipal corporation's efforts to encourage environmental sustainability within their community.

Heritage Conservation Leadership*

Any municipal practice that demonstrates the municipal corporation's work as a steward of heritage, or the municipal corporation's efforts to encourage heritage conservation within their community. (*New category!)

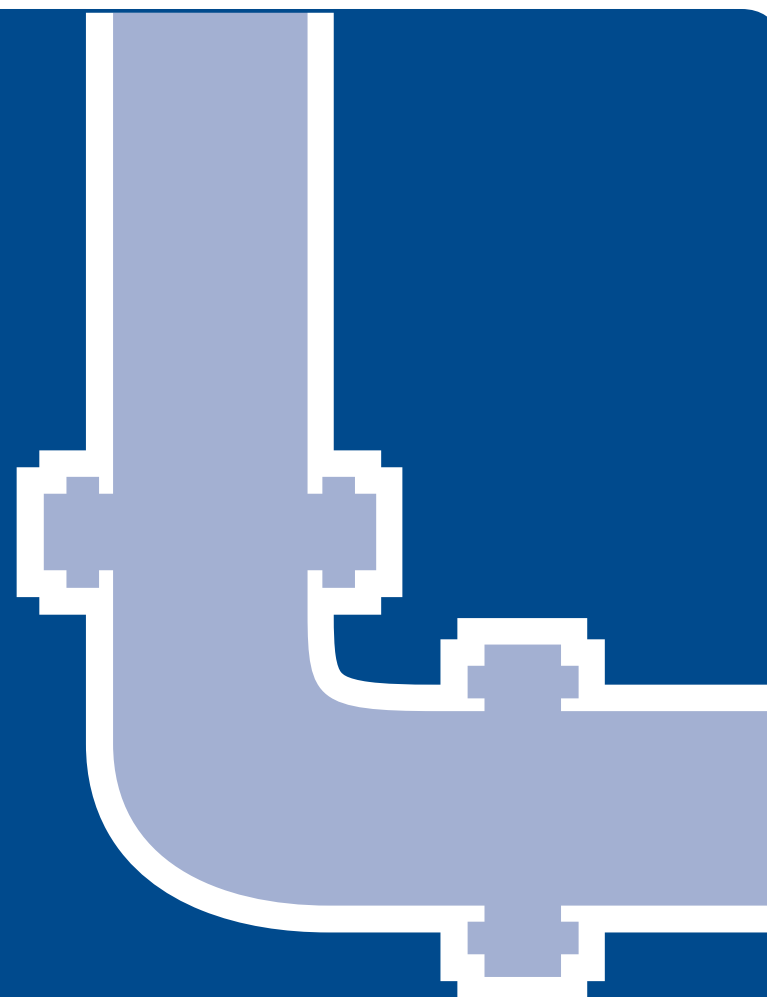
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