

URBAN*Voice*

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SASKATCHEWAN URBAN MUNICIPALITIES ASSOCIATION



2011 Convention
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Images of the White Butte region.

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The Voice of Urban Saskatchewan

CEO's *Voice*

The National Infrastructure Summit held in Regina last month might be the most significant event ever to have occurred on the subject of urban infrastructure. Indeed, the voices of municipal, provincial and private sector officials speaking about the same topic might be the catalyst we had all been waiting for. The result was a frank and open dialogue on the concerted interests of all Canadians, with a focus on creating a long term strategy to secure (among many topics) access to clean water and safe communities, and to promote a prosperous economy.

Most of us already have a good understanding of the challenges facing



all communities, large and small. The recent implementation of the new accounting rules regarding tangible capital assets has proven to be a major step in quantifying unfunded infrastructure replacement and the associated financial reserves which should be funded to guarantee the ongoing maintenance and replacement of equipment. Everyone agrees: it is becoming critically imperative to identify and implement a sustainable financial approach to fill in the unfunded reserves which are required to properly manage such capital.

Not only is the condition of most of our urban infrastructure already fragile, but the lack of a rock solid partnership between federal, provincial and urban governments threatens our ability to maintain quality of life in all corners of the country. I was recently reading a report from the League of Cities (United States) identifying the strong possibility that, this year alone, as many as 60 American cities may be facing bankruptcy or may default on bond repayments. In some respect, many of these cities were already doing much better than their Canadian counterparts in managing the life cycle of local infrastructure. However, the negative impact of the economic downturn on local revenues (from property taxes and other sources as they exist in the United States) has critically affected the viability of numerous local governments. A successful strategy must reflect both the growing and declining states of the economy. As we often say, steel does not quit rusting and concrete does not stop decaying simply because the GDP went down or because a funding program has been phased out.

At the end of the summit, local officials were told to get better at telling their story. Many of us fail to effectively

communicate what we mean when we talk about infrastructure, whether it is about growth related infrastructure, the infrastructure obligation or simply replacing what we have. We must be candid and frank about the state of our public transit systems, water systems, waste management and recycling facilities, of our libraries and leisure centres, of our police and fire service buildings and equipment. We need to use words and examples residents can understand and can personally connect with. A few weeks ago, in the midst of a very cold week, Regina residents heard public announcements advising them to reduce their water usage due to unexpected electrical and mechanical problems at the Buffalo Pound water treatment plant for approximately 24 hours. Without anyone losing this vital service, Regina residents quickly became more interested in how water got into their homes. Their level of awareness of how the system operates, how much it means to them on a daily basis and the need for urban government to be proactive were the main lessons at the end of that day.

In my mind, a presentation by the Canada West Foundation best captured the essence of our current challenges and opportunities on the infrastructure file. This presentation should be accessible on the summit's web site at www.nisummit2011.ca in the near future.

The discussion is not over yet. Delegates left the 2011 National Infrastructure Summit with the desire to meet again in 2012. We will keep you posted.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LM'.

Laurent Mougeot, Chief Executive Officer

President's *Voice*

Leadership and advocacy are two of the core elements of the SUMA strategic plan, the plan's intent being to establish SUMA as the leader on urban issues through passionately and proactively advancing and communicating these issues to relevant audiences.

At the recent annual convention, I witnessed just how effective SUMA can be when we implement our strategies and work to ensure our urban perspective is considered and reflected in every provincial decision. Since the implementation of the strategic plan SUMA has focused on becoming an organization with influence and the ability to affect real change. We believe our impact should match our profile, representing 80 per cent of Saskatchewan's municipal population.

In the past year we have increased the number of face-to-face meetings between directors, provincial cabinet ministers and MLAs. Whenever there is an opportunity for the association to take a stand on issues that affect urban governments we actively engage in the discussion. Recent examples include responses to each ministerial mandate letter outlining our interests and in some situations offering support to the minister in achieving some of their goals. We have identified key issues such as the Urban Highway Connector Program and provided opportunities for our members to voice their concerns. We have also taken the initiative, leading on matters of importance, such as water management and housing, to bring together other organizations that share our interest in advancing these files. In addition, a plan for enhanced media involvement is currently being drafted which will see our interests communicated beyond government to our citizens.

All of this work has started to pay off. We have, in recent weeks, seen significant program announcements and policy changes from the provincial government on issues for which SUMA has advocated. At the convention we learned that the Minister of Social Services will develop a plan to address the affordable housing crisis in Saskatchewan. We have also heard of the reduction in contribution levels for municipalities in the construction of health care facilities to 20 per cent down from 35 per cent. SUMA has always maintained that urban municipalities should not be responsible for contributing, and in recent months had pursued this issue with the Minister of Health and other government officials. Clearly, the minister listened to the concerns of our members and delivered.

SUMA is dedicated to advancing the interests of urban governments in Saskatchewan and ensuring that our cities, towns and villages play an important role in setting public policy in this province. I am confident that SUMA is and will continue to be successful in this role.



Allan Earle, President



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White Butte: *A Leader in Inter-*

By Dawn M. Barker

Saskatchewan's urban governments have a long-standing history of friendly competitiveness. Similar to the "Dog River vs. Wullerton" rivalry at which the t.v. show *Corner Gas* pokes fun, most towns have had undercurrents of competition for decades – whether it's a sports rivalry (one town's hockey team excelling over that of its neighbour), a have/have not situation (the fact that one community has a facility or feature that another does not), or a situation whose roots are buried in the sands of time, communities haven't always been able to work together as cooperatively as they should.

Some inroads have been made. For instance, Waterwolf (near Outlook) was formed to ensure that the water of nearby Diefenbaker Lake was resourced and used properly, and Fort Qu'Appelle banded together with the surrounding resort villages on such issues as tourism and waste, but these remain the exceptions rather than the rule.

However, innovative minds have realized that inter-municipal cooperation is crucial for urban governments to realize the economies of scale and efficiency. The White Butte Region is one of the province's foremost examples of the benefit of this sort of thinking.

Including the urban governments of Pilot Butte, White City and Balgonie, along with the Rural Municipality of Edenwold which encompasses the Emerald Park and Industrial Park developments, White Butte has come farther than any other inter-municipal venture in the province.

It all began when the mayors and reeve of the municipalities bordered directly

east of Regina gathered to talk about creating an informal regional committee group to discuss issues of common concern. Prior to this, members of the Capital City Region (some 38 communities within an 80 kilometre radius) had made similar efforts, but were stalled due to the sheer size of the region, and sometimes diverging needs.

"We thought that regionally, we could meet monthly and look at ways to cooperate," said White Butte Chairperson (and Balgonie Mayor) Tim Sterzer. "We examine projects that would benefit all the municipalities, and look at them in a cooperative, supportive way, to see what could be done." The R.M. of Edenwold is rather unique in that it contains Emerald Park and Great Plains Industrial Park and provides many services normally associated with an urban municipality. It was natural to include them in the process.

The first step to the collaboration was to determine whether, indeed, there was a need and a desire for such a formalized group, and so a Request For Proposal (RFP) was put forth. HJ Linnen Associates was the winning tender for the work, and over an eight month period, undertook the work to determine the commonalities and goals of the group, and identify the challenges and roadblocks for the combined entity. The Regina Regional Opportunities Commission assisted the group in the process.

The group applied for funding through the Planning For Growth program, and was one of seven projects in the larger population category chosen to receive funding to continue the planning process. A number of common concerns were identified within the funding application and initial process

for focus including – highways, water, waste water management, recreation, fire and protective services, schools, tourism, planning and development, and others.

There are currently two subcommittees operating – highways, and fire and protective services, with more being looked at for some of the key short term initiatives identified as part of the HJ Linnen process.

The initial concern for each of the partners in White Butte was the safety of the travel corridor which runs through the region. A study was commissioned (sponsored and funded by the Ministry of Highways and the four members) that would look at the current state of the corridor, options for changes to the corridor, costs and strategies on implementation. Open houses were held as part of the process for the rate payers to provide input.

In November 2010, Highways Minister Jim Reiter announced functional design changes in the form of the addition of acceleration and deceleration lanes to begin immediately, and stating that the design process for three future interchanges will be looked at going forward. The entire project was estimated as taking between 20-25 years (by which time the estimated \$135 million cost would conceivably quadruple).

White Butte is now working with the Ministry on options to move the entire project to completion in a shorter time frame than the current projected timelines.

Utilities were another area that were covered in the initial start-up period, where the White Butte members saw potential benefits of cooperation. Prior to its creation, each of the

-Municipal Cooperation

municipalities ran water and waste water management processes individually. The Building Canada Fund applications from three of the municipalities required a look at a potential regional system.

"We had to look initially at whether one large plant for the region would be workable," Sterzer said. "In the end, it was tagged as one of the long-term goals, because until all the communities had stable base systems for backup, a single plant didn't economically make sense in the short term. Each municipality was at a different level of delivery and ownership and thus a common base needs to be established first. The next step, after we're all on the same playing field, is to look at whether a centralized service with the ability to control water rates across the region would be desirable and feasible. It's one of the longer-term pieces of the plan."

The second subcommittee was set up to focus on fire and protective services and is currently working on options of how those services can be delivered cooperatively, maintain and/or improve current service levels, equitable funding and ongoing operation options for the region. The current reciprocal agreements in place within the region were extended to the end of 2011 to provide time for the committee to explore the various options. An RFP was sent out for assistance in evaluating or creating options for review by the member municipalities. The third committee, in the process of being formed, relates to recreation. This group will look at ways to enhance the work of the current volunteer boards and look at regional options for facilities, fee structures, management and maintenance. There is a unique identity already created for the various communities with the cooperative

nature of the baseball, softball, ringette, hockey and soccer associations. Sterzer said the group wants to build on that cooperative character and create an overall regional approach for the recreation needs of the ratepayers by sharing the vision echoed in the re-naming of the region's sports teams, which were previously separate, to the shared name "Prairie Storm" (except current baseball teams).

"We will talk about how to enhance regional ideas for things that may include a single fee structure for all recreational facilities, and perhaps a central coordinator to book all those facilities," Sterzer said. "Most are run by volunteer boards, and they still would be, but this would help them out."

The long range goals of the White Butte Regional Committee will be to look at common service and development bylaws and fee structures, common wording within the Official Community Plans for each municipality and potentially, one official community plan

for the region. The potential exists that by standardizing bylaws within the area, the RCMP will find it easier to enforce them consistently.

White Butte's members commit to one meeting per month, with the various subcommittees meeting monthly, or as needed. Representatives for the subcommittees aren't limited to council members, but are picked from each community depending on the expertise needed for that subcommittee.

Sterzer cautions that there aren't a lot of immediate benefits to be seen in such a collaboration, with the exception of potential savings on material acquisitions (sand, pipe, equipment, etc.), depending on the economies of scale within the area; however, the long-term overall potential cost savings on the operations side are significant. By looking at the options for centralizing the services provided by the member municipalities, redundancy can be eliminated and services can be improved. White Butte is clearly a trendsetter as it moves into the future.



Members of the White Butte Region signed an agreement to formalize the region in June 2010

Dalmeny Firefighter *Honoured* as

By Dawn M. Barker

The desire to improve his community, help his fellow residents, and make a difference has set Fire Chief Rick Elder of the Dalmeny Fire Department apart from firefighters across Canada, a fact recognized by the Reader's Digest last year when he was included in a discriminating group of the country's finest.

Always a Saskatchewanian, Rick and his wife Joanne moved to Dalmeny in 1989, where they have resided ever

since and raised their family (Karly, 18; Mitchel, 12; and Jenelle, 10). A pipeline operator at SunCor, Rick felt the inherent call to help his community through volunteerism, and so two decades ago, he joined the local fire department.

With a range of outside interests beside firefighting, including photography, quadding and camping, one wonders what sustains Rick's commitment to the department.

"At first, it was one of those common clichés – that you want to serve your community, to help out, to get to know people," Rick said.

Over time, though, he stayed on because he liked the work. "It's still all about community service and giving back, but there are times when we've made a difference in someone's life – say on medical calls – that are a big part of it. The other folks on the fire department make you want to keep going back, too," he added.

"The word volunteer doesn't mean that you're unprofessional," Rick was quoted in the Reader's Digest article. "To me, a professional strives to constantly improve their craft. So that's what drives me – it's to be the best I can be."

That motivation, and a creative mindset, led Rick and Joanne, along

with two colleagues from the local fire department to institute the First Responder program in Dalmeny and become the department's first First Responders. Prior to that, emergency victims in the area had to wait for an ambulance to arrive from Saskatoon before receiving any medical help. Rick is modest about his contributions. "I'm just glad to have been part of the evolution of the fire service in Dalmeny," he said, noting that over the years

*"That's
what
drives me
– it's to be
the best I
can be"*

the department's group of volunteers has made vast improvements in their training, the levels of service they provide, both operationally and with a diverse set of skills, and variety of



Dalmeny Fire Chief Rick Elder was designated as one of Canada's top firefighters by Reader's Digest recently.

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equipment which has been added to the fleet, to widen the scope of their work.

In the Reader's Digest article, Joanne credited Rick's foresight for many of the changes. When it became apparent that the department was facing a large number of grass and field fires, he led the department to invest in wildland firefighting trucks and gear. Dalmeny was the first small urban centre fire department north of Saskatoon to do so. The addition of water tender equipment also supplemented the volume of water available to fight remote fires, which may not have a readily available water supply.

Like all communities, Dalmeny continues to find that volunteer recruitment is an issue. "It's a common thread across the country," Rick said. "People have busy lifestyles, and something like this requires a lot of commitment, in terms of training and time spent responding to calls. They may come in the middle of the night or during a child's birthday party, and you have to be willing to get up and go. That adds to the complexity of the job."

He said that one of the firefighters within the department nominated him for the Reader's Digest designation without his knowledge. When he received the call that he had been chosen, Rick was totally surprised.

"It kind of knocked the wind out of my sails," he said. "But it was great." He added that the town's reaction to the news was overwhelmingly positive. "People congratulated me on the street, that sort of thing," he said.

The honour of being designated one of Canada's finest isn't the end of Rick's career on the fire department, though. As fire chief, he continues to play a prominent role at local community events, whether the annual pancake breakfast fundraiser or the local Christmas pageant.

"I plan to keep on as long as I can keep moving forward," he said. "I really enjoy it. I like being part of the progressive nature of the department, and seeing it move forward. If it ever comes to a point where I don't feel I am moving forward in a positive manner, then I'll consider stepping down."

Cultural engagement in Municipalities

SaskCulture has launched a new funding program, the Municipal Cultural Engagement and Planning Grant designed to support municipalities undertaking cultural engagement and planning initiatives.

Municipalities can apply for funding to assist them with cultural planning projects that explore and plan for the creative and cultural potential of a community.

For more information visit www.saskculture.sk.ca or call Dennis Garreck at 780-9265, email: dgarreck@saskculture.sk.ca or call toll-free 1-866-476-6830.

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Special Section - *2011 Convention*

Sen. Pamela Wallin Extols Saskatchewan's Future

By Dawn M. Barker

Cherish the opportunities, rise to the challenges – this was the message brought to SUMA delegates at the 2011 SUMA Convention in Saskatoon.

Senator Wallin, who has an impressive 30 year span as journalist, entrepreneur, diplomat and member of the Canadian Senate, said that the demographic change Saskatchewan is experiencing requires leadership and commitment, and congratulated the event participants on providing this to their communities.

Hailing originally from small-town Saskatchewan, Sen. Wallin is very familiar with the positive qualities often associated with Saskatchewan residents: tolerance, accommodation, responsibility, innovation and hard work. She noted a few of the challenges on the radar for the province, including transportation, infrastructure, economic development, tourism, immigration, education and First Nations issues. In order to turn challenges into opportunity, she said, Saskatchewan's leaders and residents need clarity of purpose and foresight – to “skate where the puck is going to be”, in the fashion of Canadian hockey legend Wayne Gretzky.

Sen. Wallin said that her experience as a member of last year's Saskatchewan Municipal Award jury was “breathtaking”. She was very impressed by the wide array of nominations for projects that displayed incredible creativity and hard work. “It really is about connecting voices,” she said, referencing the convention theme.

She provided a perspective on Saskatchewan, and Canada overall, from her work abroad. “Saskatchewan is the hottest commodity and energy play in North America,” she said.

“They are going to need us. They need us now.” The question she brought for the audience is that of how to leverage such a relationship effectively, considering Saskatchewan's position as the new ‘it’ province. “It truly is our time,” she smiled.

One meeting a few years back stood out in Sen. Wallin's mind – that of newly elected Premier Brad Wall speaking at a private event in Toronto, noting that Saskatchewan had in past received equalization payments, but now with the province coming into its own, pledging that his province would pay back those contributions and more. “That's what being Canadian is all about,” she said, urging the municipal leaders present to be ambassadors for their province through community spirit, innovative business approaches, and a willingness to be a good example.

The Senator examined our country's relationship with its largest trading partner, the U.S., and the need to work cooperatively with the Americans and other countries around the world. She lauded Canadian peacekeepers and their selfless efforts across the globe, and posited that “character trumps genius”, noting that Canadians must strive to keep the character of their country kind, decent, fair and generous.

She closed her address with a stirring quote originally by Marianne

Williamson, previously put forth by South African President Nelson Mandela: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate; our deepest fear is that we are powerful. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us, but playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people around you won't feel inadequate. When we let our own light shine, we give permission to let other people do the same.”

“That is Saskatchewan's mission in the next decade,” the Senator concluded.



*“Playing small
doesn't serve
the world”*

Provincial Government *Visible* at 2011 Convention

By Sean McEachern

The strong government-to-government relationship that exists between SUMA and the Government of Saskatchewan was evident at the recent convention, through the presence of many senior government officials.

With increasing growth in urban municipalities, which now account for more than 80 per cent of the province's municipal population, the annual SUMA convention provides provincial Cabinet Ministers and senior officials the opportunity to engage with multiple urban government leaders from across the province. This allows them to hear the issues and concerns of urban residents and the ability to discuss ideas and initiatives the Government of Saskatchewan is proposing.

During the four day event, Municipal Affairs hosted a number of meetings between urban councils and other ministries in their office onsite. Most cabinet ministers and many MLAs also

participated in various sessions and events. Delegates were offered the opportunity to hear speeches from the Premier and the Minister of Municipal Affairs. Both of these addresses were key events at the annual convention, as the Premier and the Minister took the opportunity to highlight provincial initiatives aimed at urban governments and to make program announcements that benefit our communities. In addition, the attendance of nearly the whole cabinet at the dialogue and Bear Pit sessions was appreciated. These are two components of the annual convention that delegates enjoy as they provide an opportunity to ask questions of our provincial leaders and hold them accountable. SUMA is always grateful for the participation of the Ministers, and we thank them for attending.

The prominent attendance of the Government of Saskatchewan at the SUMA convention clearly shows that the issues and concerns of urban governments are critical and are taken seriously by the province.



Convention Session *Recap*

By Mark Cooper, Sean McEachern and Che-Wei Chung

The following article provides a brief summary of the various sessions held throughout the 2011 SUMA convention. This includes education, concurrent, and sector-specific sessions.

Education Sessions

Civic Engagement

Attendees at the civic engagement session were presented with information from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs on the legislative requirement to engage the public on council decisions. The presentation also focused on the various ways in which council can involve public participation such as town hall meetings, establishing advisory committees and newsletters to citizens.

In addition, Philippe LeClerc from the City of Regina offered some ideas on how urban governments can use social media tools like Facebook and Twitter to inform citizens of events and consult them on council initiatives. Attendees saw tangible examples of how the City of Regina uses these tools to enhance their communication strategy with residents.

Effective Council Meetings

Focusing on the importance of employing council-approved procedures and maintaining a professional environment, this session provided delegates with ideas to ensure effective council meetings and solutions to problems delegates may experience in their own council chamber. Former City of Regina clerk Randy Markewich, Paul Topola, Mayor of Assiniboia and Steve Piermantier, Administrator from the Town of Nipawin provided insight into the policies that their councils have approved to ensure that council decisions are made appropriately and that all councillors have an opportunity to engage in debate. They also shared

their experiences as part of council, or working for council and witnessing at times the challenges that can occur when there is no structure.

Regional Solutions: Working together to provide services

More and more urban governments realize that working together allows them to provide better service to citizens than would otherwise be possible. This session brought together best practices in both Saskatchewan and Alberta. Speakers from the Municipal Capacity Development Program highlighted homegrown regional initiatives and ways the program can assist urban governments to start working together. Presenters from the Summer Village of Ma-Me-O Beach, Alberta, and the Twin Lakes Community Association shared their experience of finding a regional model that fits their needs and how this regional model has transformed intergovernmental relationships with their neighbours.

SUMA's Lobby Strategy and You

The session involved a presentation by Harvey Linnen on the review of SUMA's advocacy work that he conducted in 2010. Harvey presented information on his findings, and specifically on how SUMA is viewed by the provincial government. He also identified recommendations for SUMA going forward. Mark Cooper, SUMA's Director of Policy and Communications, followed with a presentation on SUMA's response to Harvey's report. Mark highlighted the various ways in which SUMA's approach to advocacy is evolving. Particular attention was paid to the issue of governance of the Multi-Material Recycling Program as an example of an issue which urban governments are uniquely positioned to influence.

Concurrent Sessions

Leveraging PS 3150 Data into an Asset Management Plan

As most urban governments are now compliant with new regulations to report tangible capital assets (TCA) in their financial statements there is a growing demand for information on the concept of asset management. Representatives from VEMAX management provided a brief presentation on the pilot project conducted with the Town of Dalmeny, using their TCA data to develop a snapshot of an asset management plan for specific asset class within their community. Participants in the session were introduced to some of the basic principles of asset management. They were then shown the costs associated with urban infrastructure and how important it is to have an effective strategy to deal with maintenance of an asset on life cycle cost to ensure the most value is obtained from the investment, and to prepare for the future replacement of assets.

Emergency Management: Lessons Learned from a Summer of Storms

The session was well attended by delegates, who wished to learn from the experience of other urban governments. The Ministry of Corrections, Public Safety and Policing outlined the importance of urban emergency planning and tools available to help urban governments develop emergency management plans. Speakers from Maple Creek, Yorkton and Kindersley highlighted how the unforeseen event changed their community and emphasized the value of being prepared for emergencies.

Age-Friendly Communities

This session included presenters from Manitoba, talking about the Age Friendly Manitoba initiative. Mayor Eileen Clarke of Gladstone is the Urban

Vice-President of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. Mayor Clarke spoke about her experiences leading the age-friendly efforts in Gladstone. Louise Hutton works for the Centre on Aging at the University of Manitoba. She spoke about the provincial experience advancing age-friendly issues and some of the lessons learned. Much of the Manitoba focus is on designing communities for senior citizens. While delegates found this to be interesting, many questions emerged about the design needs for communities with children and young families. The important lesson from the session is the need to understand community demographics and to make conscious community design decisions with those demographics in mind.

Sector-Specific Sessions

Cities Session

Changes made to the 2011 convention agenda allowed more opportunities for delegates to meet with colleagues within

their specific sector. For the cities sector, guest speakers were Dr. Joe Garcea from the University of Saskatchewan and Regina City Councillor Mike O'Donnell. Dr. Garcea took delegates through a high level presentation on the future for cities in Saskatchewan. He explored the various challenges and opportunities that currently exist and will exist in the future. These areas include funding for operating and infrastructure, the demographic changes occurring and the increasing growth being experienced by cities in this province. Councillor O'Donnell provided an interactive presentation on the themes that were discussed at the recent National Infrastructure Summit held in Regina. His presentation looked at the need to explore new ways to fund infrastructure, the new technologies being used to build infrastructure and the pressures that cities are experiencing due to aging infrastructure and the lack of funding available to address this vital area.

Northern Sector Session

Northern delegates and guests from

several stewardship programs and the provincial government discussed recycling challenges in the North. The session provided a forum for stewardship program managers to better understand how they can work together with Northern communities. Delegates also had the opportunity to ask questions about the upcoming Multi-Material Recycling Program, Saskatchewan Environmental Code and general questions relating to solid waste management in the province.

Towns & Villages Above 500

The focus of this session was on strategic leadership. Delegates were reminded that more than 80 per cent of Saskatchewan's municipal population lives within urban boundaries. As Saskatchewan's economy and population continue to grow and become more urbanized, the pressure on urban governments will be significant. Harvey Linnen, President of HJ Linnen & Associates, spoke to delegates about the principles of strategic leadership, and how this might

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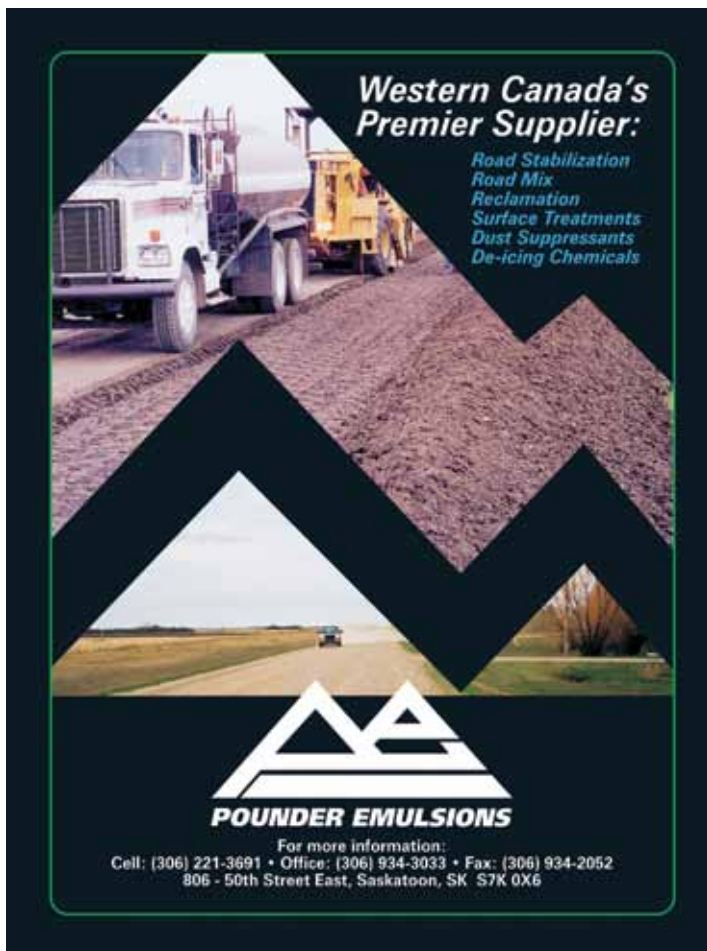
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apply in the urban context. Mark Cooper, SUMA's Director of Policy and Communications, introduced the challenging environment facing urban governments in the next twenty years. The highlight of the session was a panel discussion featuring mayors talking about the importance of strategic leadership and providing local examples from their experience. Participating mayors included: Sharon Dickie (Shaunavon); Lawrence Rospad (Nipawin); Brian Brownfield (Big River); and George Tomporowski (Shellbrook).

Towns & Villages Below 500

This session focused on the challenges facing small urban governments as the environment in which they operate becomes increasingly complex. Led by Laurent Mougeot, SUMA's CEO, the session included a dynamic panel of mayors and an administrator from towns and villages within this category. Panelists included: Barry Gunther (Sun Valley); Ansgar Tynning (Kyle); Alan Thomarat (Thode); Renaud Bissonnette (Willow Bunch); and Rodney Audette (Bethune). Leaving the session, delegates had a better understanding of how recent growth in Saskatchewan has had different regional impacts and how smaller urban governments can address challenges when facing limited organizational capacity.



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Partners' Program - *Surprises* Galore!

By Janet Olson

"This program just keeps getting better and better each year, I can't wait to see what they will do next year!" This was just one of the rave reviews the 2011 Partners' program received. The program is held the first two days of the conference and started each day at the Sheraton Cavalier.

Breakfast on the first day had several Saskatchewan crafters set up selling their handmade jewellery for the consideration of SUMA delegates' partners. The group then had three choices: a hands-on gourmet cooking class at S.I.A.S.T. led by a Red Seal Chef focusing on using unusual Saskatchewan foods; a presentation and tour of Souleio, a restaurant boasting European Cuisine and organic food; or a class called "The Mitzvah Technique", a New Age thinking class teaching methods to release stress,

alleviate pain and improve body mechanics.

The afternoon presented the crew with two more choices. They could go on a tour of some of Saskatoon's eclectic antique shops, or attend an empowering workshop presented by a certified Image Consultant and talented film and TV makeup artist. This class focused on new techniques on colour, design and makeup fun.

The second day started with a shake, rattle and roll as a mesmerizing belly dancer entered the room and got the group up and dancing, learning how to move to the music. Like the previous day, the morning had three presentations to choose from. The first was a presentation from Dr. Vicki Holmes, a national expert on midlife and its effects on women. The second was a class called "Deciphering Food Labels" presented by a registered dietician and nutritionist. The third

choice was a class named "Do you have trouble saying 'No'?" presented by a certified psychologist who led the class in assertiveness training.

The next stop was a lunch at the Victorian Dining Room, an intimate and unique setting, where a handsome and talented young man played haunting Latin music while the group dined.

Then it was time to pamper the ladies, who spent the afternoon at beauty schools, relaxing with massages, pedicures, manicures and hairstyling. Several members of the group decided to opt to brave the cold elements to tour the University of Saskatchewan and review its heritage and marvellous architecture.

Surprise door prizes, gift baskets, handmade shopping opportunities and decadent desserts kept everyone guessing as to what was next.

Images: Convention Scrapbook



Saskatoon Mayor Don Atchison and "Marilyn"



President Allan Earle thanked Premier Brad Wall for his presence at the event



SUMA staff ready to get the show on the road! L-R: Susan Dishaw, Sean McEachern, Tauna Kupiec, Mark Cooper, Ashley Bezo, Gerry Ullman, Laurie Bryant, Fran Ullman, Tania Meier, Shauna Brown and Che-Wei Chung



Conference delegate Michael Pidwerbeski at the Board Hospitality Night with SUMA Board members Darren Hill and Dawn Luhnning



Convention delegates enjoying the hospitality



These folks were trying their hand at 'winning big' during the "Puttin' On The Glitz" event



Administrator Rodney Audette and "Marilyn" posed for a snapshot





Board member Barry Gunther (3rd from left) added a bit of humour during the grand entrance to the convention. L-R: Board members Chris Wyatt, Sharon Armstrong, Barry Gunther, Bruce Fidler, Dawn Luhning, Ben Buhler, Rodger Hayward, Rolly Zimmer, Al Heron and Paul Topola

The "Flash Mob" activity sponsored by InMotion had everyone moving and smiling



Lt. Governor Dr. Gordon Barnhart addressed the convention delegates during Monday's event opening ceremony



SUMA delegates voted on resolutions

Convention 2011



The 2011 conference was well attended



Health Minister Don McMorris spoke to the media during a scrum



The conference sessions were engaging and informative



SUMA CEO Laurent Mougeot "pushing around" Senator Pamela Wallin, who attended the event in a wheelchair



"Elvis" provided a musical welcome for SUMA delegates who entered the "Glitz" event on the red carpet



Conference attendees had sketches done by a caricature artist at the "Glitz" evening

Sask Legislative Internship Program *celebrates* 10th SUMA Convention appearance

By Nicole Hamm, Lance Hammell, Shaheen Lotun and Bennet Misskey

The four students participating in the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program (SLIP) had the privilege of attending the SUMA Annual Convention for the 10th consecutive year. This convention has been a very valuable educational experience for interns over the last decade. Interns always return from the convention with a greater appreciation for the issues and challenges facing urban municipalities throughout Saskatchewan, and they gain a better understanding of the process through which governments and stakeholders develop solutions to meet those challenges.

SLIP is a non-partisan internship program designed for senior university students and recent graduates in which interns provide assistance to an MLA on each side of the Legislative

Assembly of Saskatchewan. Interns work on a non-partisan basis for their MLAs, performing a number of services such as conducting research, drafting members' statements and position papers, preparing briefing material, and helping constituents to obtain the services they require. The 2011 SLIP interns are Nicole Hamm (Rosthern), Lance Hammell (Oxbow), Shaheen Lotun (Weyburn), and Bennet Misskey (Regina).

Given that municipalities represent the level of government closest to the citizens, we were very interested to learn about the ways in which municipal government can foster democratic participation. We took particular interest in a presentation on civic engagement, which emphasized how the recent surge in social media combined with the close personal contact between citizens and municipal governments can

revolutionize the way we think about politics. With the growing popularity of Facebook, Youtube, and other innovative mediums of communication, there exists the potential for greater personal accountability, increased responsiveness between citizens and the state, and the accommodation of a wider and more diverse variety of viewpoints.

Other highlights for the interns included attending the keynote addresses of Premier Brad Wall and Senator Pamela Wallin, watching the "Bear Pit" session, in which the Premier and his Cabinet were placed on the hot seat to answer questions from stakeholders, and attending the Dialogue with Ministers meetings. We are very grateful to SUMA for its ongoing support for SLIP and especially to Laurent Mougeot and Sean McEachern for helping to make the convention a personally enjoyable experience for the interns.



Lance Hammell, Nicole Hamm, Shaheen Lotun and Bennet Misskey enjoyed their attendance at the SUMA convention as SLIP delegates.

Rethinking *Communities*

By Fred Clipsham

Regina's mayor Pat Fiacco often says "We are funding cities using a 19th Century taxation model, but that model doesn't work for 21st Century communities." To find out what options exist - elsewhere in Canada and the world - the Mayor convened the first National Infrastructure Summit in Regina during January.

The Summit brought all three orders of government together with the private sector to discuss infrastructure - one word with a broad definition, including roads and bridges, water and wastewater systems, facilities for sport and recreation, stations for fire and police services, and so on.

But infrastructure also includes highways and ferries, airports and ports, health and education facilities, jails and court houses, Parliament and Legislatures, office buildings etc. that are under the jurisdiction of the Federal and Provincial governments.

Despite the fact that infrastructure has been discussed by governments and communities of every size for decades, Canada does not have a national infrastructure policy; yet never before has the attempt been made to lay the groundwork for one. The 350 people attending the Summit agreed the three days were an excellent first step towards the goal of a national policy.

The Summit wasn't intended to be limited to funding options, but also to discuss the challenges and opportunities for innovative and sustainable ways to plan, build and maintain infrastructure in all its forms. Speakers from Saskatchewan, Canada, the U.S. and the Netherlands engaged in dialogue on best practices, utility models, governance, asset management and community consultation. The results exceeded all expectations.

Urban centers are the engines of a dynamic and durable economy, providing economic and cultural services that attract and retain investment and skilled workers. Vibrant and sustainable cities and communities are an essential part of the nation's economic recovery and continued strength and vitality. But, as Mayor Fiacco says, 21st Century communities can't do all this using only funds collected via the property tax.

So the goal of the Summit was to move beyond the "blame and shame" language of recent years towards an agenda of joint partnership. To do this, organizers encouraged discussion around five themes.

Vibrant and sustainable cities and communities are an essential part of the nation's economic recovery and continued strength and vitality.

Theme 1 - Defining the Need

Since the 1950s, local governments have built well over half of public infrastructure existing today; provinces have built one-third; and the federal government one-tenth. The infrastructure 'gap' exists not only financially, but also in terms of leadership, organizational behavior and culture. A national framework gives all levels of government the opportunity to explain their needs at a common table, and then develop a coordinated solution.

Theme 2 - Program Models

Urban governments haven't done a good job of communicating infrastructure costs, but neither do they have a wide variety of financing and delivery tools to sustainably fund infrastructure investments. Because the great bulk of the infrastructure challenge is in the tax-supported category, rather than in user-pay systems, Canadians need to be prepared to pay the true cost of the infrastructure they use - either that, or reduce their expectations for service.

Theme 3 - Innovation

Most public infrastructure is decades - or even a century - old. Builders traditionally approached solutions from within their silo of expertise. That must change. Engineering students, for example, would benefit from an understanding of ecology, economics and human behaviour so they can design more sustainable buildings and structures. Many innovative solutions already exist on the shelf. The challenge is to incorporate them into new and renovated infrastructure.

Theme 4 - Citizen Engagement

Governments must value the right of citizens to have greater influence on the decisions that affect their lives. Citizen engagement emphasizes the sharing of information and power and increases the legitimacy of public decisions, but is citizen engagement right for every decision? What is the best time to engage the public?

Montreal Mayor Gerald Tremblay explained how that city's Charter of Citizen's Rights and Responsibilities has been successfully used to enhance the outcomes of several recent large infrastructure developments.

Theme 5 - Financing the Opportunities

Resources at all levels of government are scarce. It is increasingly difficult to maintain, upgrade, build or expand the infrastructure required for our growing communities - so, how do we pay for infrastructure? And what should we be paying for? Are the answers simply about financing - or are they about leadership and innovation?

Mississauga Mayor Hazel McCallion says property taxes should only be used to service property, not people, yet her community of 750,000 is home to the headquarters of 75 of Canada's largest corporations - would they be there without local investments in economic development and cultural facilities? Years ago, Premier Mike Harris downloaded the responsibility for housing onto Ontario municipalities without providing the needed funding or new tax tools. So, while Mayor McCallion's principle sounds good, it doesn't jibe with the reality of Canada's 19th Century municipal taxation system.

There were several very positive outcomes from the Summit. It was the first step in a collective dialogue necessary to position local governments and Canada for 21st Century opportunities and partnerships. Industry was delighted to be part of the discussion, as they will play a crucial role in designing, building and maintaining our nation's infrastructure. A national

working group was established, comprised of government and industry experts, to develop a National Infrastructure Strategy.

A second Summit, already set for Regina in June, 2012, will build on the significant engagement we saw in January. Canadians need, and want, a strategy to address the infrastructure needs of local governments, provinces and Canada.



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Changes are coming!

At SUMA, we're always seeking to improve the way we communicate with our members. The revitalized, more modern and more attractive format for the UrbanVoice Magazine you're reading right now is just one aspect of our continuous communications improvement efforts.

Other differences SUMA members will see in the coming months include changes in the way we pass along information (specific emails structured to address individual topics of interest), more targeted content for the UrbanVoice, enhancements to the way we seek feedback from our members, changes to our ad structure, and a renewal of our website.

Watch your regular Urban Update e-newsletter for more information. If you don't receive your own copy of the UU, why not sign up? Just click the "Join Our Mailing List" button on the SUMA homepage (www.suma.org).



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Municipal Capacity Development Program: Building *Sustainable* Communities in Saskatchewan

By Tanya Doucette, Development Officer, Municipal Capacity Development Program

Spring is just around the corner, with a promise of new life and growth – a fresh start for building sustainability for Saskatchewan's communities. To assist municipalities in their sustainability efforts, the Municipal Capacity Development Program would like to re-introduce Saskatchewan municipalities to our program and services.

The Municipal Capacity Development Program (MCDP) was created as a partnership between SUMA, SARM, New North, and Municipal Affairs in 2006 based on the outcomes of the Clearing the Path Initiative. The program was created with the goal of promoting growth and cooperation through inter-municipal partnerships and focuses on providing assistance to inter-municipal groups through

facilitation, education, training, and research.

When you and your neighbours have the desire to build communication on one particular issue or all issues of planning for the area, MCDP can facilitate your initial discussions, assist in the creation of a community action plan to address your mutual areas of interest, and develop a level of group structure to keep the group aligned and motivated.

With the aspiration to build your inter-municipal relationships also comes the need to understand and learn to address your mutual areas of interest, challenges and opportunities. MCDP provides education and training on numerous topics to help you become better equipped to handle strategies head-on. We partner with other organizations to provide workshops on grant and proposal writing, planning, waste management, etc. Our workshops are based on the needs of municipalities and custom designed for administrators and councillors in the area.

To communicate and promote sustainability and inter-municipal cooperation resources, we co-edit a sustainability newsletter called Interconnections, and maintain our own MCDP website, www.municipalcapacity.ca. Our website

houses resources, templates, useful links and inter-municipal agreements on many different topics collected from municipalities across the province and through the research MCDP has conducted for inter-municipal groups. Among these resources are two guides MCDP has developed if you wish to build your own cooperation with neighbours (Guide to Municipal Cooperation) and begin to collect information on the assets in your community for planning and sustainability (Guide to Comprehensive Asset Mapping). The MCDP website is also home to the My Community Discussion forum where you can ask questions and interact with other municipalities.

Whether you want to build sustainable relationships with your neighbours, address mutual issues of concern or gain knowledge on planning for the future, the Municipal Capacity Development Program is available to assist. You can access our contact information via the MCDP website. We look forward to hearing from you.



The Case for Appraisals:

“What does it matter if my buildings are not fully insured?”

**By Zahid Cheema,
Suncorp Valuations**

Suncorp Valuations recently appraised the assets of a town here in Saskatchewan. The RCMP Office was previously insured for \$80,000, and Suncorp valued the building at \$116,000, according to current constructions costs.

Now if there was a small fire, with smoke damage, let's say \$25,000 worth of damage, how would this play out before our appraisal?

The insurance company required that they insure their buildings up to 90 per cent of their actual value. Ninety per cent of \$116,000 is \$104,400, and they were only insuring it for \$80,000. This means a penalty would apply on any loss.

The penalty applied is the current limit divided by what the insurer expected them to insure at. So \$80,000 (current limit) divided by \$104,000 (should have been insured for) multiplied by the amount of the loss. ($\$80,000 \div \$104,400 = .77$) ($.77 \times \$25,000 = \$19,250$)

In our scenario of a \$25,000 loss, only 77 per cent is covered. A cheque for \$19,250 minus the deductible would be issued to the municipality.

The remaining \$5,750 is left to the municipality to raise.

This building was not drastically underinsured, but you can see how this plays out, and can have a dramatic effect.

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SUMA recognizes 40 of Saskatchewan's Best

Forty deserving award recipients were acknowledged at the 2011 Awards Banquet during the SUMA Convention in Saskatoon. These included people nominated for Meritorious Service Awards, Honorary Membership Awards, and the Scoop Lewry Award.

Former Nipawin mayor and council member Glen Day was chosen to receive the Scoop Lewry Award, in recognition of his outstanding service to his community and council. The sought-after award is presented in memory of former Moose Jaw mayor "Scoop" Lewry, who dedicated his career to improving his community with a kind and humanitarian spirit.

Meritorious Service Awards are granted to appointed municipal staff members to recognize their career success, dedication and involvement in the local community. These award recipients are unique individuals who have become role models in their communities and who strive to an improved quality of life and strength in our local governments.

The 2011 winners included Doug Arthur, with 34 years of service as Assistant Administrator in the Town of Biggar, Sheryl Ballendine, who has served as Administrator for 29 years in the Town of Battleford, Sharon Doell, who was celebrated for her 26 years as a Clerk in Warman, Allan Dreher, who has been Fire Chief in Delisle for 31 years, Bruce Fehr, who has a 25 year commitment with Public Works in Swift Current, Randy Fehr (21 years in Stock Control in Warman),

and Blaine Frank, who has served the City of Weyburn for 32 years, working his way up to Director of Engineering.

Warman's Ivan Gabrysh, the Town Manager, was celebrated for his 22 years of service, and Frank Guenther's 29 years in Public Works in the same community were noted with an award. Police Stenographer Denise Hellegards received an award for her 20 years of service in Kamsack, Cheryl Hoshowsky of the City of Swift Current, who has spent 23 years as Store Keeper, and Norman Labrash of Meadow Lake, whose 21 years in Parks and Recreation were also up for awards.

Other award recipients included Garry Misiurski (28 years as Town Foreman in Colonsay), Maureen Morrice (20 years as Eston's Assistant Administrator), Richard Olson (Town Foreman, now 26 years with Biggar), Bruce Palmer of Yorkton (29 years, Golf Course Superintendent), Norm Parachoniak, also of Yorkton (24 years in Public Works) and Murray Paulson (20 years in Public Works with Hudson Bay). Among the honoured award recipients were Kathy Sarvas, who was recognized for her 31 years as Clerk Steno in Biggar, Indian Head's Conrad Schreiner (31 years, Public Works Foreman), Ken Siemens (Warman, 28 years in Public Works), the 30 year contribution of Leo Skaluba, Yorkton's Golf Course Superintendent, Chris Thunstrom (23 years as Deputy Fire Chief in Delisle), Judi Thurlow (Administrator in Warman for 25 years), Cindy Toney of Swift Current (Steno for 25 years) and

Front Row: (left to right) Maureen Morrice; Mary Kay Zaporosky; Kathy Sarvas; Sheryl Ballendine; Cheryl Hoshowsky; SUMA President Allan Earle; Honourable Darryl Hickie, Minister of Municipal Affairs; Judi Thurlow; Denise Hellegards; Sharon Doell; Beverly Wheeler. Second Row: (left to right) Randy Fehr; Richard Olson; Doug Arthur; Chris Thunstrom; Cindy Toney; Allan Dreher; David Simonson; Kendal McCuaig; Terry Vehnon. Third Row (left to right) Frank Guenther; Robert Hryniuk; Ivan Gabrysh; Norman Parachoniak; Bruce Fehr; Leo Skaluba; Lorne Campbell; Norman Labrash. Fourth Row (left to right) Ken Siemens; Garry Misiurski; Murray Paulson; Dennis Wishnevetsky; Glen Day. Absent: Blaine Frank; Bruce Palmer; Conrad Schreiner; Jamie Webber; Pam Wiebe; Bob Blenkinsop; Orval McArthur; John B. Woodward.

Terry Vehnon (Yorkton's Public Works Department for 24 years).

The Meritorious Service Awards were rounded out by recognizing Jamie Webber's 25 years with Creighton's Public Works Department, Beverly Wheeler's 25 years as Administrator in Denare Beach, Steno Pam Wiebe's 24 years with Swift Current, Kamsack's Director of Utilities, Dennis Wishnevetski's 20 year career, and Wadena's Mary Kay Zaporosky's 25 years as an Office Assistant.

The Honorary Membership Awards are granted to elected officials throughout the province to recognize the long-term dedication to, and involvement in, their local communities. These recipients are unique individuals who demonstrate leadership in their communities and who strive for an improved quality of life and strength in our local governments.

Eight individuals were presented with these awards, including council members Bob Blenkinsop (21 years, Village of Hawarden), Orval McArthur (36 years, Star City), Kendall McCuaig (20 years, Eastend), David Simonson (20 years, Outlook), and Maurice Therien (20 years, Neilburg). Mayors Lorne Campbell (21 years with Star City) and John Woodward (22 years with Tompkins) completed the list of recipients.