

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, I am pleased to present our 2004/2005 Annual Report. This report represents the seventh year of the AMM and reflects the many activities of our organization over the past year.

At our 2004 Annual Convention in Winnipeg, I had the honour of being elected as President of the AMM. In reflecting on the challenges of the past year I believe we, as an organization representing Manitoba municipalities, have much to be proud of.

In terms of our policy and lobbying activities we made significant progress on our number one issue, education taxation on property. We saw a total reduction of 50% in farmland property taxes, along with a continued reduction in the education support levy. While we had hoped for further reductions, these are indeed positive steps that were only achieved due to a strong and united effort on the part of our membership. We will continue to lobby for further reductions in the coming year.

It was also gratifying to see a number of important pieces of legislation come to pass over the past year, most notably Bill 33: The Planning Act. The AMM is pleased that our push to ensure that municipal councils maintain the final say on land use planning decisions is reflected in this Bill. With the interconnected Water Protection Act regulations still being refined, the AMM promises to be ever vigilant to ensure local control over water management planning, as well.

Another very important issue for our members this year has been the impending Federal New Deal. As I write this report, we are very close to an agreement for Manitoba. The New Deal will see \$167.3 million in gas tax funds flow to Manitoba municipalities over the next five years. These funds will represent a very positive step toward addressing our infrastructure deficit and will certainly bring a measure of much needed relief to municipal bottom lines.

The AMM broke some new ground this year, in the form of Lobby Days. Lobby Days were significant as they represented the first opportunity the AMM has had to take important municipal issues to *all* MLAs, not just the Provincial Cabinet. We were pleased to have the opportunity to share some of our most important issues, and furthermore to hear support for many of our positions.

The AMM also initiated the *Flooding and Wet Conditions in Manitoba* regional meetings in late summer, and I would like to sincerely thank municipalities for their input and candour during these meetings. Your comments made us aware of some emerging issues and also pointed out problems that we had already indicated existed. The recommendations contained within the resulting report are

awaiting a provincial response and I anticipate some positive changes to the way disaster assistance is handled in Manitoba.

I owe a great deal of thanks to the AMM Board of Directors for their support over the past year. The AMM's successes could not be achieved without a strong, effective Board of Directors and we are fortunate to have just that. I would like to thank the four outgoing directors – Steve Lupky, Albert Nabe, George Harbottle, and Harold Foster – for their commitment and dedication to the AMM during their tenure. At the same time, I welcome our four new directors – Alice Bourguin, William Danylchuk, Robert Misko, and Randy Sigurdson – for allowing their names to stand and taking on this increased responsibility. The position of AMM Director is indeed a rewarding experience and I am confident they will make a significant contribution to our Association.

Finally, and most important, I would like to thank you, the membership of the AMM. Your support, encouragement and advice throughout the year are appreciated, and we salute all the good work you do to make your communities better places to live.

Enjoy this annual report and the accomplishments we have made together in 2004/2005.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Bell".

Ron Bell
President



Manitoba Premier Gary Doer and AMM President Ron Bell at a recent infrastructure announcement.