

President's Message



On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, I am pleased to present the 2005/2006 Annual Report. The past year, the eighth in AMM history, was exciting, productive and even groundbreaking in some cases.

One of the most significant events of the year for the AMM and our members took place on November 18, 2005. That is

the day that the Province of Manitoba and the Government of Canada signed the Canada-Manitoba Gas Tax Agreement, representing \$167.3 million in gas tax revenues to be invested in cities and communities across Manitoba over five years. All municipalities have now signed funding agreements and received their first payments.

While the share of federal gas tax revenues municipalities now receive is appreciated and needed, we recognize that municipalities are facing a much larger obstacle in the form of an ever increasing infrastructure deficit. Municipalities' main source of revenue is property taxes, yet municipal responsibilities span so much more than basic property services today that it is difficult to keep pace with the added demands. The result of this inequity is that municipalities cannot afford to maintain their rapidly deteriorating infrastructure.

The federal government has acknowledged that a fiscal imbalance exists in Canada between all three orders of government, and all three orders of government agree that the current financial arrangement is not sustainable. The current mismatch of revenues and responsibilities is not productive and the time has come for a change. More is needed than a simple one time transfer of surplus revenues, and all orders of government need to work toward the implementation of a sustainable plan to address the challenges facing Canadian communities.

By the same token, we have been advocating for a serious examination of the roles, responsibilities and resources of all orders of government here in Manitoba. There is little doubt that our communities need help, and with only eight cents

of every dollar going to municipal governments in Canada, greater revenue sources are needed. While appreciated, one-time grants and transfers are not enough to make a meaningful impact on the serious infrastructure issues facing our communities and do not allow community leaders to make long-term plans. Only through this examination will we be able to meet the needs and expectations of all Manitobans.

These developments with respect to infrastructure are the result of strong lobbying by the AMM and other organizations, and by you – municipal governments who face this deficit every day. Our lobbying efforts have had an additional key result – an increase in public awareness around the infrastructure deficit. In fact, recent media reports and polls strongly suggest that infrastructure renewal is now a top priority for the public. Hopefully, with public opinion driving the issue to the forefront of decision-making at both the Provincial and Federal levels, we will see increased financial resources make their way into municipal budgets.

An election year always means a changing of the guard at the AMM, and we have seen some board members depart to take on other challenges. I'd like to thank Garry Wasykowski, Rural Vice-President, and Lorne Boguski, Urban Vice-President, for their years of dedication to municipal government and the AMM. Lorne, Garry and I worked side-by-side for several years, and their knowledge of municipal issues will be greatly missed at our board table. I also bid farewell to Stan Ward, Karen Caldwell, Rick Martel and Jae Eadie. These board members logged many hours on behalf of the AMM and I wish them all the best in their future endeavors. Thanks also to the rest of the board for their continued dedication and contribution to the AMM. You are all true professionals whose work on behalf of our members is important and appreciated.

In closing, I must reserve my greatest thanks to you, the members of the AMM. While we have faced many trials, we have also gained much and I believe that over the past year we have most certainly achieved that most important milestone:

Executive Director's Message

strong and effective municipal government. We have much yet to do in addressing our infrastructure deficit, but working with the Federal and Provincial Governments over the coming year, we can make significant progress in addressing this key municipal issue.

I hope you enjoy this annual report and the accomplishments we have made together in 2005/2006.



Ron Bell, AMM President



I am pleased to provide the Executive Director's message for the eighth annual report of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM).

On the financial side, the AMM and Municipalities Trading Company of Manitoba Limited (MTCML) continue to be strong, as shown in the financial statements in this report. MTCML sales increased this past year, and as a result the AMM was able to offer a rebate back to the membership for the fifth consecutive year. This year's rebate was \$500,000, bringing the total rebates back to the membership to \$1.75 million over the past five years. We sincerely thank all municipalities for their continued use of our trading company. It is clear our members understand the value they receive from the trading company, as illustrated in some of the members' comments on p. 27 of this report. We would also like to express our appreciation and thanks to our official suppliers. They offer our membership excellent products and services at discounted prices that are second to none.

In terms of our events, this past year the AMM was able to offer two first-rate and affordable professional development courses for elected officials. Our other events, including the Annual Convention and Municipal Officials Seminar & Trade Show, were also well attended and are further highlighted on pages 22 and 23.

On the communications side of the AMM, our magazine and bulletins continue to improve and keep our membership informed on various initiatives of the AMM. As well, visits to the AMM website at www.amm.mb.ca has doubled over the past two years. We attribute this increase to the website being easy to use, always up to date and offering a wealth of resources to our membership.

Our policy and lobbying activities continue to make good progress on the major issues facing municipalities. These are outlined in more detail in the President's message and in the rest of the annual report.

I would like to thank our Board of Directors for its support and guidance throughout the year, including those Board members who are no longer on our Board.

To our staff at the AMM, I would sincerely like to recognize the excellent work they do on behalf of our Board and our membership. They are dedicated and professional in the performance of their duties and I could not do my job as Executive Director without their support.

I would like to thank and acknowledge President Dale Lyle and Executive Director Mel Nott of the Manitoba Municipal Administrators Association (MMAA) and all the members of MMAA for their valuable contribution to the AMM. We truly value the partnership and excellent working relationship between the AMM and MMAA.

Lastly, I would like to thank our membership for their continued advice, support and encouragement. You have welcomed our Association to your offices on municipal visits, provided us with valuable feedback on various issues facing municipalities and you continue to serve your communities with dedication.

We hope you enjoy this annual report and we look forward to continuing to work on your behalf in the coming year.



Joe Masi, Executive Director