

SPECIAL EVENTS

AMM MISSION TO EL SALVADOR

President Ron Bell, Rural Vice-President Doug Dobrowolski and Executive Director Joe Masi spent January 12-25, 2007 on a trip to El Salvador that was anything but a vacation. The mission was to develop a work plan that will assist the AMM's El Salvadoran counterparts, The Corporation of Municipalities of the Republic of El Salvador (COMURES), to move ahead with a lobbying strategy and commitment aimed at helping their organization improve their communities.



L to R: Executive Director Joe Masi, Rural Vice-President Doug Dobrowolski, Canadian Ambassador to El Salvador Stéphanie Allard-Gomez, President Ron Bell, and Micheline Caron, FCM.

COMURES first visited the AMM in 2006 to see how it operates and to determine how the AMM may be able to assist them in developing their lobbying abilities. The purpose of the January 2007 trip was to chart the course for the next several years. The plan involves COMURES returning to Canada for a more in-depth study on the AMM's lobbying and communication activities, after which the AMM will return to El Salvador.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) sponsors international activities for its members through their International Centre for Municipal Development (ICMD). All funding for the exchange comes from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

President Bell acknowledged that while the time commitment is significant, the benefits for both organizations will be substantial. "It is exciting to be able to share our knowledge

and experience with others," he said. "Despite our differences we have the same goals for our organizations – to achieve strong and effective municipal government. It is what we constantly strive for ourselves, and if we can help COMURES to achieve that we will both be better associations for it."



PRESIDENT BELL WITH A MEMBER OF COMURES' STAFF

"Despite our differences we have the same goals for our organizations – to achieve strong and effective municipal government." *President Ron Bell*

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MRIF PROJECT UPDATE

The initial Canada-Manitoba Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF) agreement, announced in December 2004, invested a total of \$120 million in communities across Manitoba. This year, an additional \$25 million will be provided to MRIF through matching funds from the Governments of Canada, Manitoba and local contributions as part of the commitment to help small communities meet their pressing infrastructure needs. This additional funding will bring the total federal and provincial investment and matching local contributions in MRIF projects to \$145 million.

Of the funds, 80 per cent are earmarked for communities with a population under 250,000, including 197 municipalities and 50 unincorporated Northern Community Coun-

cils in rural and northern Manitoba. The remaining 20 per cent of funds are awarded to communities with populations over 250,000.

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This is a six-member committee consisting of the President and two Vice-Presidents from the AMM, the President and a member of the Northern Association of Community Councils (NACC), and an official from Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

As of August 31, 2007, 67 projects totaling over \$113 million have been announced. The most recent funding announcement took place in Anola on July 16, 2007.

Applications are assessed by the Rural/Northern Federal-Provincial-Local Consultative Committee (FPLCC) on Infrastructure.



FPLCC on Infrastructure members (L to R): Manitoba Aboriginal & Northern Affairs representative Jeff Gordon, NACC President Reg Mead, AMM President Ron Bell, AMM Urban Vice-President Shirley Kalyniuk, AMM Rural Vice-President Doug Dobrowski

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PROVINCIAL-TERRITORIAL MINISTERS

In an unprecedented example of working together, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) accepted the invitation of the Province of Manitoba to address the annual meeting of Provincial-Territorial Ministers Responsible for Local Government on July 14, 2007. The AMM was invited to present so the Ministers could hear firsthand about the key issues and challenges facing municipalities in Manitoba and across Canada.

"This is a very significant event for the AMM," said AMM President Ron Bell. "While these Ministers meet annually to discuss issues that relate to their common goal of strong and viable municipalities, they do not typically invite municipal associations to participate. We were pleased to be invited and to provide the Ministers with input on municipal issues and concerns."

"This is another example of our successful partnership with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and as host province of the Provincial-Territorial annual meeting, we were extremely pleased the AMM accepted our invitation to be part of the event," said Steve Ashton, Manitoba Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

The AMM used the opportunity to focus on two of the most significant challenges facing municipalities across Canada – infrastructure and the municipal 3R's - the roles, responsibilities and resources of municipal governments. Bell explains: "The harsh reality is that municipalities, for a number of varying reasons, have taken on more and more responsibility over the years but haven't seen the accompanying resources."

"This is another example of our successful partnership with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities..."

Steve Ashton, Manitoba Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Bell notes this opportunity was a good first step towards working with provincial local government Ministers on an ongoing basis for the future health and prosperity of municipalities across Canada. "Municipalities are more than willing to work with the Province to find solutions to these challenges. No single order of government can do this alone. We need to work together and we think this meeting has started the dialogue."



L TO R:

MANITOBA
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
MINISTER STEVE
ASHTON

AMM PRESIDENT
RON BELL

SASKATCHEWAN
GOVERNMENT
RELATIONS
MINISTER HARRY
VAN MULLIGAN