

Snapshots

Housing

- A significant part of the AMM's interest in increasing housing funding stems from the need for a variety of options for seniors.
- The AMM currently has two resolutions on the books that highlight the need for funding for seniors housing projects and supportive housing in particular.
- The Province is entering the third year of its four pillar low-income housing strategy to improve access to low-income housing, revitalize existing public housing, improve programming for the homeless, and assist with renovations to low-income housing.
- This includes \$16.5 million over three years to build affordable housing for older Manitobans.
- Although a survey of AMM members found that the Province's strategy generally suits the needs of communities with low-income housing, there is still a need for all communities to have access to housing programs.
- In the past, smaller communities faced obstacles to participating in housing programs and these administrative barriers must be eliminated in order for the new programs to be effective.

- For example, programs should consider that the low-income threshold varies by region depending on the cost of purchasing basic necessities in that area.
- The AMM has also raised the need for Federal funding support for housing and supports FCM's demand for a national housing strategy.
- Although it did not include a specific strategy, the recent Federal Budget included \$400 million in targeted funding for the construction of housing units for low-income seniors that will be delivered through the Affordable Housing Initiative and cost-shared with provinces and territories.
- The Province has also included housing in the four-year, \$4.7 billion investment plan for capital projects announced in November's Throne Speech.

Promoting Business Opportunities in Rural Manitoba

- The AMM has also discussed the need to invest in rural businesses with the Provincial Government.
- The Province has committed to expanding training opportunities into rural communities, but more can be done to strengthen the economy through skills training.
- As well, retiring business owners need help with succession planning.
- Communities do not want to lose well-established businesses and supports must be available for individuals looking to take over these operations.

- Another issue relates to the Federal and Provincial commitments to invest in infrastructure, since this will increase the demand for a local workforce with the skills and training to implement these major projects.
- The AMM raised these issues with Minister Swan in February and recommended the Province work with communities to promote and retain local businesses through training and development initiatives.

Child Care in Rural Manitoba

- Another important part of a thriving community is making sure child care services are available.
- Research shows that every \$1 spent on child care in Manitoba generates \$1.58 worth of economic activity, since the wages earned by the families using child care and those employed in the child care sector are spent in the local economy.
- Child care also supports job creation by allowing both parents to participate in the labour force and creating jobs within the child care centres.
- The AMM recently brought this issue forward to Minister Mackintosh to discuss Provincial support for child care centres and employees.
- Employees' wages are simply too low given the importance of their jobs and the Province needs to move faster to rectify this.

- In the 2008 Budget, the Province committed to fund more spaces, establish a training and recruitment fund and increase salaries for childhood educators.
- However there hasn't been enough movement to increase wages and attract more people to the child care field since the announcement was made.
- Without committed workers, communities can't offer the child care facilities they desperately need.
- The AMM met recently with Minister Mackintosh and was pleased to see the Province continues to make this area a priority
- The Family Choices program is into its second year and the attention is now focusing to improved training options as the first year focused on increasing the number of spaces
- The AMM will continue to monitor the implementation of the Family Choices program and will continue to push to have improvements made to the system across the province