

### Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program

Funding is now available under the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund, a five-year program representing a partnership among the three levels of government. All Manitoba local governments, non-profit and private sector organizations are eligible to apply for support for local infrastructure projects. The first intake deadline has passed and the second intake deadline for 2005 is June 15, 2005. Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis with subsequent intake deadlines set annually on the advice of the program's local consultative committee. All applications remain active until the program's final approval date of March 31, 2010. On-line applications and further information are available at [www.infrastructure.mb.ca](http://www.infrastructure.mb.ca).

### Workers Compensation Act Review

The *Workers Compensation Act Review* Committee Report was released on February 3, 2005. The report includes 100 recommendations on modernizing and updating the *Workers Compensation Act* and is the product of public consultations held during 2004. Recommendations addressed ongoing municipal concerns such as additional wage-loss benefits and recognition of occupational diseases for volunteer firefighters. The Review Committee provided an opportunity to contribute further feedback by submitting comments on the report. The input received by this additional consultation process is expected to assist the provincial government in determining legislative changes to be introduced and policy changes to be implemented. The report is available at [www.wcbactreview.com](http://www.wcbactreview.com).

### Manitoba Planning Excellence Awards

The Manitoba Planning Excellence Awards recognized two award winners and one honorary mention for planning excellence at the 2005 Manitoba Planning Conference in Brandon. Selections were made on the basis of four main criteria: innovation; excellence; outcome and effectiveness; and participation and applicability. Spearey Environmental received an award for the Downtown Brandon Greenway Planning Study, which identifies planning and design opportunities including provisions for bicycling, strengthening

existing greenspaces and the introduction of appropriate streetscaping. The Evergreen Waste Facility Steering Committee received an award for Evergreen Environmental Technologies, an innovative an environmentally responsible solution to the waste management problems faced by the area. An honorary mention was presented to the South Central Planning District and Lombard North Group (1984) Ltd. for the South Central Planning District Development Plan.

### Mining Program renewal

The mining industry has obtained support from a renewed commitment to two key mining exploration programs. The Mineral Exploration Assistance Program (MEAP) and the Manitoba Prospectors Assistance Program (MPAP) have been renewed for another three-year period as of April 1, 2005. The MPAP provides assistance of up to 35% of approved eligible expenses (to a maximum of \$400,000) per recipient each fiscal year. The MEAP provides assistance of up to 25% of approved eligible expenses to a maximum \$300,000 per recipient each

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fiscal year. Program funding for non-fuel mineral exploration will be allocated twice a year to coincide with the spring/summer and fall/winter mineral exploration periods. The Provincial Government investment of \$7.5 million is expected to generate \$35 million in mining investment in Manitoba. Further information is available at [www.gov.mb.ca/iedm/mrd](http://www.gov.mb.ca/iedm/mrd).

**Proposed amendments to the Emergency Measures Act**

The Province is proposing the *Emergency Measures Amendment Act*. This Act would allow Manitoba to enter into mutual-aid agreements with American states, as well as other levels of government within Canada, and to share our emergency resources. It would be possible for two or more jurisdictions to share resources for training purposes as well as during emergencies. Such agreements ensure that assistance is provided quickly without misunderstandings about costs, and they ensure that personnel assisting in other jurisdictions are provided privileges and protection. Manitoba is currently developing a mutual-aid agreement for emergency management among Manitoba, North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota. Titled *The Great Plains Compact for Emergency Management Co-operation*, it is expected that this agreement will be signed late this year.

Manitoba is also considering developing a mutual-aid agreement between the provinces and territories. This will be done at the direction of the premiers at

the Council of the Federation meeting in July.

**New Emergency Medical Services Centre in Brandon**

Faster response times and more efficient co-ordination and deployment of emergency medical resources in rural and northern Manitoba will be the goal of a new command and control center for emergency services.

The new Medical Transportation Co-ordination Centre (MTCC), to be located in Brandon, will become the dedicated center for the dispatch of all rural and northern emergency medical services including northern medivacs. The MTCC will ensure the closest available ambulance is dispatched to emergency calls and will be able to assist medical responders in locating emergency scenes through GPS technology.

The MTCC will also be responsible for managing and coordinating all non-emergent, inter-facility transfers within the City of Winnipeg. The Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic Service will continue to handle all emergency medical dispatch within the City of Winnipeg.

The MTCC is on track to be launched by summer 2006. A request for proposals will be issued shortly, calling interested parties to submit proposals on the development of the Centre.

**Province supports aerospace industry**

The province has committed a \$5 million loan to the Magellan Aerospace

Bristol Division to support Manitoba's aerospace industry. This investment will help generate up to \$90 million in revenue, **Minister Jim Rondeau** (Manitoba Industry, Economic Development and Mines) reported. Up to five new business development initiatives will be supported by the investment including manufacturing high-end titanium assemblies, developing new-age composite manufacturing processes, and machining and processing exotic alloy engine modules. Financing for the projects comes from a 10-year repayable loan from the Manitoba Industrial Opportunities Program (MIOP). Since its inception, this Program has assisted more than 129 major projects resulting in \$964.8 million in direct capital investment.

**New Resources Designed to Capture Growing Opportunities**

Communities are going to be served with new and expanded resources to accommodate the changing rural economy. Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) **Minister Rosann Wowchuk** lists economic development, primary production and food commercialization as the building blocks of rural communities. These key areas are the focus of current initiatives. All 10 Growing Opportunities (GO) teams in Manitoba will be staffed with economic development officers, including three newly created positions.

MAFRI is also increasing its support to agricultural research at the University of Manitoba to support innovations in crop science and animal and food science research. An additional research focus is in food-processing production. The new Food Development Centre in Portage la Prairie is establishing a Food Commercialization Knowledge Centre which will include an organic-marketing specialist to assist the Manitoba industry gain greater access to this developing field. A third area of funding MAFRI is committed to is the establishment of the Office of the Chief Veterinarian. This office will be an independent authority communicating with Manitobans regarding, among other issues, animal disease, the transmission of diseases between humans and animals, food safety, public health as it relates to animal diseases and animal/food bioterrorism emergencies.

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