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## Hometown Applications 2005

The Province's *Hometown Manitoba Program* was introduced in 2003 to improve the physical enhancement of main streets in northern and rural communities. Among its intentions is the encouragement of economic growth, social sustainability and helping citizens maintain a feeling of pride in their communities while helping retail, social, educational and recreational facilities meet the needs of local residents. Cost-shared funding is available for the improvement of main street projects under two categories: Main Streets Meeting Places (up to \$5,000) and Main Streets Enhancements (up to \$1,000). The deadline for applications is March 15, 2005. For more information, contact 1-800-567-7334.



## Soy plant in Portage la Prairie

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has been signed between the Province and a Chinese company interested in developing a soybean processing facility in Portage la Prairie. With this MOU, the Province of Manitoba, the City of Portage la Prairie, the RM of Portage la Prairie and Linyi Shandong Biological Products Co. Ltd. will share the costs of a study on the plant. The agreement is the first step in a process that will be followed by engineering studies and environmental approvals. The facility will process soy oil and produce various products for use in the food industry, primarily for export to China. Among the reasons why Portage la Prairie was selected for the plant include transportation, labour, infrastructure and the supply of non-genetically modified soybeans.

## Rural Forum 2005

Manitoba's 13<sup>th</sup> annual Rural Forum will be held April 28-30, 2005, at Brandon's Keystone Centre. The Rural Forum provides rural and northern communities

with a venue to network and consider new economic development prospects for revitalization and sustainability. Through seminars, workshops and open forums, new insight and knowledge can help the development of partnerships and ideas for the continued economic growth throughout rural Manitoba. Other activities to enjoy include hundreds of community, cultural and business exhibits, a Manitoba-featured food course, a one-day craft show and Manitoba entertainment.

## Manitoba Council on Aging Act

As our population ages, it is increasingly important for local governments to support the needs of senior citizens. The Manitoba Council on Aging was first established in 1980 as an advisory council to the provincial government and in 1994 began reporting to the minister responsible for seniors. The valuable work of this council will now be established in a legislative framework. Among the council's key roles is to provide information and advice regarding programs, services, policies and legislation relating to the aging process and the needs and interests of older Manitobans. Municipalities are facing new challenges, as the senior population increases and the continuing work of the Manitoba Council on Aging should serve as a valuable resource into the future. This council will be a key component in an overall strategy to support seniors in our communities.



**Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce**

Manitobans have established the first Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce in Canada to provide a unified voice for Aboriginal business and commerce. This new organization will help to strengthen resources available to Aboriginal entrepreneurs and existing business owners to promote the valuable contribution that Aboriginal businesses make to Manitoba's economy. In addition to lobbying for members on business and commerce issues, the top priorities for the organization include

developing an Aboriginal business incubator, organizing an International Indigenous Summit and developing land at South Point near The Forks. This coordination of local businesses acts as an important contribution to strengthening Manitoba's economy.

**Travel Manitoba legislation**

Tourism is an integral part of Manitoba's economy, contributing approximately \$1.4 billion and employing directly or indirectly 60,000 Manitobans. This widespread industry will benefit from concerted efforts

to market the province and develop additional tourism opportunities. A positive step in this direction has been the recent proclamation of legislation establishing Travel Manitoba as an agency of the Crown to promote and foster growth in the province's tourism industry. Travel Manitoba's board of directors is comprised of several key individuals who will work together to provide timely advice and effective programming. Communities across the province benefit from tourism activity and the support of this agency will focus the development of new opportunities in this sector.

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**Tax Credit Program**

The Manitoba Community Enterprise Development (CED) Tax Credit Program is intended to support the growth of Manitoba community enterprises by encouraging Manitobans to invest locally. In exchange for investing locally, individuals can earn a provincial income tax credit of 30%. A maximum annual \$30,000 investment would be eligible to receive a tax credit worth \$9,000.

Qualifying community enterprises or registered Community Development Investment Funds (CDIFs) will have an opportunity to raise up to \$500,000, the maximum amount eligible for tax credits. Eligible enterprises will be expected to provide investment, jobs and economic development opportunities and must be endorsed or sponsored by a local community development organization. Interested organizations or Manitobans interested in learning more about investing should contact the CED Tax Credit Program office at 1-800-567-7334. ☎