

AMM blitzes Legislature

By Tyler MacAfee, AMM Director of Policy and Communications

One of the biggest challenges for the AMM is how to get municipal issues on the government agenda. This is what the AMM is mandated to do and this is key to being an effective lobbying organization.

Over a relatively short period of time, the AMM has gained the respect of government and is in a unique position to have the opportunity to meet with each Provincial Cabinet Minister individually each year as well as the Premier and the entire Cabinet. Not only are top departmental issues raised at each meeting, but general issues also, such as the need to remove education funding from property. The AMM is confident that the Provincial Cabinet is aware of the top municipal issues. However, Government is more than just the Provincial Cabinet and this is why the AMM undertook a new initiative this year – Lobby Days.

Following an initiative developed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the AMM set up meetings with the ‘backbench’ Members of the Manitoba Legislature to raise three top municipal issues. The issues were the need to remove education funding from property, water and land use planning, and the New Deal for municipalities.

Lobby Days, held on April 19 and 20, 2005, saw the AMM meet with every Conservative and Liberal MLA individually and with both the NDP Rural and Northern Caucus and Winnipeg Caucus. This was

an excellent opportunity for the AMM to not only introduce some MLAs to the AMM, but also to let them hear firsthand the issues facing Manitoba’s municipalities.

The AMM was pleased to hear that many on Broadway agreed that education funding needs to be removed from property. This has been a top issue for the AMM for several years and the AMM appreciated having the chance to raise it with all MLAs. There is no doubt that everyone in the Legislature now knows the AMM’s position on this issue. It was also important to provide a municipal perspective to the MLAs on the issues surrounding planning in Manitoba. With revisions to the Planning Act introduced this legislative session, and the Water Protection Act still under debate at the time of the meetings, it was crucial that all MLAs understand the implications this legislation will have on municipalities and the need to ensure responsibilities, especially financial responsibilities, are not downloaded to municipalities. It was also beneficial to clarify the AMM’s position on the Federal New Deal and the need to get the funding out to municipalities quickly.

There is no doubt that Lobby Days was a success and the AMM will not only be looking at ways to improve the process for next year but also for other new and innovative ways to make sure the municipal agenda is known by everyone in government. ☺

Stuart Murray (R), Leader of the Official Opposition, talks with AMM Eastern Rural Director George Harbottle and Eastern Urban Director Art Rempel.



AMM Western Rural Director Karen Caldwell (L) addresses the NDP City caucus, including MLAs Harry Shellenberg, Chris Aglugub and the Hon. Jim Rondeau.



Dr. Jon Gerrard, Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party (R) and MLA Kevin Lamoureux.



AMM directors and staff meet with the NDP caucus.

AMM Mid-Western Urban Director Shirley Kalyniuk and Interlake Urban Director Steve Lupky meet with MLA Jack Reimer.



Northern NDP Caucus member Gerrard Jennissen addresses the AMM, while Mid-Western Rural Director Roger Wilson looks on.



MLA for Tuxedo, Heather Stefanson, addresses the AMM.

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