

# Gord Steeves

## 3rd Vice-President, Federation of Canadian Municipalities

*Gord Steeves is no stranger to elections. His first election was for MLA under the Liberal banner in Riel (St. Vital) in 1995. While unsuccessful in that election, Steeves has been on a winning streak ever since. He was elected school trustee for St. Vital in the 1998 civic election. He won Al Golden's former seat in the 2000 by-election, and was re-elected by acclamation for the same seat in 2002. Most recently, Steeves was elected 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM).*

*As St. Vital's councillor, Steeves is very active in the ward; working in partnership with community clubs, senior's homes, social clubs and individual constituents to help ensure the community's ongoing success. He is Chair of the Civic Environmental Committee, Chair of the Public Works Committee, and also sits on the City's Executive Policy Committee and the Economic Development Committee.*

*Prior to his entry into public service, Steeves practiced law in the St. Vital community. He was the chair of the board of trustees for Winnipeg Technical College, and has served on the finance committee. He also serves as a director on the board of the Old St. Vital Business Improvement Zone and has also acted as the chair of property acquisitions.*

*An accomplished athlete, Steeves participated in basketball, track and hockey in high school, played semi-professional baseball with the Brisbane Eagles in Brisbane, Australia, and during university was the three-year captain of the Bison's football team, which was ranked #1 in Canada. He also played on the hockey and track teams, and was the CFL fourth round draft pick for the Edmonton Eskimos in 1990.*

*In addition to his official duties, Steeves continues to play hockey for a local team, and is the proud father of a three-year-old daughter. The AMM caught up with Steeves recently.*



### **Have you always lived in St. Vital?**

Yes, but I also had a bit of a split childhood. My father was a teacher in Winnipeg, but my parents also farm near the Town of Carnduff, SK. My Dad is retired from teaching now, but they still farm in the Carnduff area.

### **What initially prompted you to run for a council seat?**

The position became available and, after being around provincial politics, I was getting a bit tired of party politics. I felt that civic politics would be more non-partisan, more hands-on, and I was hoping it would

be a little easier to get things done for the people that I work for. I've found that is definitely the case and it's been an extremely rewarding path.

### **Congratulations on being elected 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President of FCM at the end of May. What prompted you to become involved with FCM, and to carry on to the Board level?**

The City of Winnipeg has an automatic representative at FCM, and when the position became open, I was interested in it for several reasons. I wanted to learn more about

the federal organization. It was very early in my councillorship, and I was feeling that it was difficult for Winnipeg, as an individual municipality, to reach out and solve our problems. I was also very impressed with **Jack Layton** (NDP leader and former FCM president), who really piqued my interest in the organization.

Then, when Winnipeg hosted the 2003 FCM convention, I offered to chair the organizing committee. By virtue of chairing the committee, my profile grew. We had a really excellent convention and it helped to not only increase my knowledge of the FCM

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organization, but my exposure also, which helped me become elected.

### Do you aspire to one day becoming FCM president?

I certainly hope to be. I really, really enjoy the people involved with FCM. I like getting to know the other councillors from all across Canada, and the staff members in Ottawa. I think I can help in lobbying for some of the larger issues of municipalities. And I love politics – I think it's the best job in the world.

### What do you see as your top priorities during your tenure?

My priorities are pretty much in line with the larger ones of the FCM. In terms of the New Deal, we have an opportunity that has never before presented itself. We have to capitalize on how far we've moved the ball, and we simply can't lose focus of all the work we've done so far.

### What do you think having a Manitoban on the FCM Board means for AMM members?

I think I can help to present a unified voice. I'm a very accessible person, and I understand the issues very well. I think it's important to recognize that as municipalities, we have to be very clear that we want and need a relationship with both the Provincial government and the Federal government. I think the Province currently is going through some difficult negotiations with the Federal government, and as municipalities, we have to make sure that our voice isn't lost in those negotiations. Municipalities recognize that the Province has some priorities of its own – that's fair ball. But what we don't want to see is municipal priorities becoming *conditional* on provincial priorities.

### This magazine is seen by every municipal elected official in Manitoba. Is there anything else you would like to add, from the perspective of a fellow elected official sitting at the FCM table?

The thing I want to stress is that the main challenge of FCM is to focus on all municipalities, not just large municipalities. The work we do is about every single municipality, and that is something I try to be always cognizant of. ●

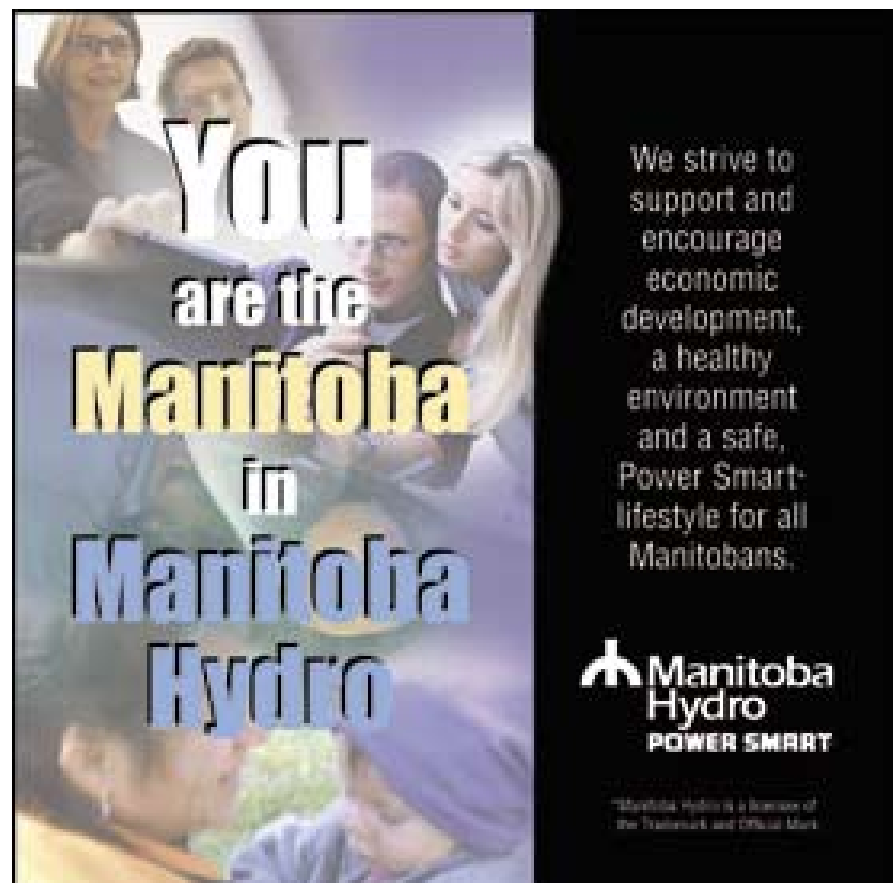


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