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### **Manitoba Water Directory**

Manitoba Water Stewardship has recently published a directory of federal and provincial government departments and agencies, non-government groups, professional associations and community groups that have an interest in water and aquatic ecosystems. The purpose of the Water Directory is to provide a tool to facilitate the efforts of various interest groups working together toward the shared goals of preserving and improving Manitoba's water resources. Access to information regarding complementary programs and established organizations should avoid duplication of services and promote efficient water resource management. The Water Directory can be accessed online at [www.gov.mb.ca/waterstewardship/](http://www.gov.mb.ca/waterstewardship/)



### **Riparian Tax Credit**

Manitoba's waterways are a key priority for the Provincial Government. For this reason, enhancements have been made to an existing program that offers property tax credits in return for appropriate management of riparian areas. The Riparian Tax Credit will now include lakeshore properties, such as Lake Winnipeg, in order to complement various established initiatives. Farm operators will gain increased benefits since the amount of the tax credits will increase and the program will be extended for an additional year. For more information visit [www.gov.mb.ca/finance/esa/riparian.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/esa/riparian.html)

### **Post-secondary prior learning programs**

Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) programs at post-secondary institutions will receive \$520,000 from the Manitoba Government. PLAR is a valuable method of identifying and assessing core skills in order to qualify individuals for education programs and employment. Through this process, participants achieve employment and education opportunities that they otherwise may not have the time and resources to access. This funding will support partnerships between industries and post-secondary institutions, thereby benefiting the Manitoba economy through the enhanced skill level of the workforce. For more information visit [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aet/busemp/plar.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aet/busemp/plar.html)

### **Funding for Manitoba's friendship centres**

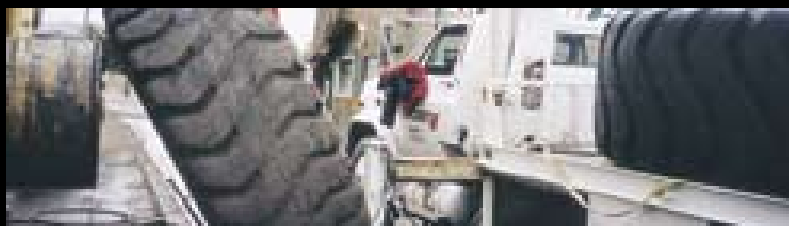
This year, the Manitoba government renewed funding of \$350,000 for friendship centres across the province. The Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres represents facilities in 10 communities and will administer this funding. Through the work of friendship centres, Aboriginal students learn about employers' needs and the demands of the competitive job market. Friendship centres also promote the benefits of staying in school and help to improve student success and completion rates in school and training programs. This programming ultimately contributes to decreasing unemployment rates through the improved employability of the students. The value of education, and its role in obtaining and maintaining employment, is emphasized by Manitoba's friendship centres. This renewed provincial funding will ensure that these valuable services continue.

### **Information and Communications Technology Association of Manitoba**

A new industry association that focuses on information and communications technology (ICT) has been established with the support of funding from the provincial and federal governments. The purpose of the Information and Communications Technology Association of Manitoba (ICTAM) will be to act



as a regional, national and international representative of Manitoba's ICT industry. There are already over 200 ICT companies in Manitoba and these companies will access new and valuable opportunities through ICTAM programming. Education, public awareness, marketing and networking will be included in ICTAM programming in order to ensure that Manitoba is well positioned in the national and international ICT sector.



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## **BSE Ruminant Task Force hard at work**

Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives Minister **Rosann Wowchuk** recently recommended to Ottawa that immediate changes be made to the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) program in order to free up \$65 million in funding that could help ruminant producers struggling with cash flow problems as a result of BSE.

The Minister also released recommendations from the **BSE Ruminant Task Force** and committed the Province to continue laying the groundwork to ensure there is a future for Manitoba's beef and ruminant industries.

In addition to recommending changes to the CAIS program, the Province will continue to support the long-term sustainability of the industry by:

- **expanding slaughter capacity** through infrastructure supports, slaughter and packer incentives, and strengthened support services for new slaughter facilities;
- **increasing surveillance and testing** through a \$442,000 expansion to the provincial veterinary laboratory at the U. of M. and \$300,000 in support to veterinary districts for infrastructure and equipment upgrades;
- **increasing marketing and product branding efforts** to strengthen local markets and create new markets; and
- **continuing the work of rural support teams** who assist farm families and rural communities in dealing with the impacts of BSE and other rural challenges.

The Minister said, "The BSE Task Force has provided the provincial government with valuable direction on how best to move forward in sustaining and securing a beef and ruminant industry, and I want to thank **Mr. Ron Bell** and the committee for their work."

She added, "Since BSE was discovered in a single cow last May, over \$100 million in provincial support has flowed to producers through direct payments and low interest loans. We need the federal government to take a stronger leadership role in assisting producers and in supporting Manitoba initiatives to expand our slaughter capacity. Amending CAIS to improve cash flow is a good first step." ●