

# Budget 2006 from a municipal perspective

By Tyler MacAfee, AMM Director of Policy and Communications

One of the most important days of the year for the AMM is the release of the Provincial Budget.

The AMM works all year to highlight key priorities to each Provincial Minister, including the Minister of Finance, and the Budget is when the AMM gets to assess its success and find out where more work is needed.

This year's budget saw moderate increases in a number of areas of interest for municipalities. Below is a list of some of the key areas the AMM has been lobbying on and what was in the Budget:

## Education Tax

- \$38 million in new money including:
  - \$34M for the elimination of the Provincial Education Support Levy (ESL)
  - \$4.7M for extending the Farmland Education Tax rebate to 60%

## Building Manitoba Fund

- Overall increase of 6% for the fund, which includes \$3.4M for rural Manitoba
- From this funding, a new Recreation and Library Infrastructure Program is created

that will see \$1.7M this year and a further \$5.3M next year

## Water Issues

- Doubling of the Provincial drainage budget, up to \$3.8M
- Increases in flood protection funding
- Doubling of soil survey teams
- Small increase in funding for conservation districts

## Economic Development

- More support for bio-fuels
- Increased Immigration funding
- Continued funding for the Churchill Gateway
- More funding for oil and gas exploration

## Other Highlights

- Minor funding increase for EMO
- Funding to fight crystal meth
- More training spots for doctors
- New Physical Activity Credit
- Aging in Place strategy funding
- More support for cultural festivals
- New police officers for Winnipeg, Brandon and First Nations

However there were some areas where the AMM would have liked to see further action:

- No 5-year plan to reduce the reliance of using property tax to finance education
- No education tax relief for commercial classes of property
- It appears no increase in dedicated funding for the development of Integrated Watershed Management Plans
- No mention of a provincial water management plan with accompanying funding, only drainage
- No new police officers outside Winnipeg, Brandon and First Nations (it should be noted that the spots announced last year still haven't all been filled)
- Neighbourhoods Alive! Program not expanded beyond the three communities it currently serves

As always, the AMM will continue to work through the Provincial Budget to see if there are any changes to other areas of interest. The AMM will also continue to lobby the Provincial Government to increase funding in key priority areas. ☺



## Miller Environmental Corporation

Contact Miller Environmental Corporation to help organize your community's household hazardous waste event. With over 10 years experience in the development and management of household hazardous waste programs, Miller Environmental Corporation can help create and plan events that will provide an ongoing waste management system to serve your community's waste collection needs.

## HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM



Household Hazardous Wastes (HHWs) are materials commonly used in and around residential households that contain toxic substances. These include household cleaning products (drain cleaners, oven cleaners, floor and furniture polish); painting products (paints, stains, finishing products and thinners); automotive products (motor oil, old gasoline, anti-freeze, car batteries, transmission, brake and steering fluids, solvents); garden products (fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides); hobby supplies (solvents, photo chemicals); and pool supplies (chlorine).



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