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News Release

AMM to blitz Manitoba Legislature

FOURTH ANNUAL "LOBBY DAYS" USED TO RAISE CRITICAL ISSUES

April 21, 2008 - The Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) will blitz the Manitoba Legislature this week in an effort to inform MLAs about top issues facing municipalities. The AMM is meeting with the NDP caucus as a group tomorrow evening, and with Conservative and Liberal MLAs on an individual basis Wednesday morning.

While the AMM meets annually with each Provincial Cabinet Minister to advocate municipal issues, the opportunity to meet with members outside Cabinet is less frequent. That is why this event is now a critical part of the AMM's annual lobbying activities. As AMM President Ron Bell explains, "The government doesn't end at the Provincial Cabinet. Bringing the entire NDP caucus, as well as the Official Opposition, up to speed about municipal concerns opens the lines of communication. That can only benefit municipalities."

He adds that municipalities aren't the only ones to benefit from Lobby Days. "MLAs are elected by the people, and it's important that they are knowledgeable about municipal issues when interacting with their constituents."

Bell notes that fiscal balance and water protection – the AMM's two most critical issues – will be the focus of Lobby Days this year. "It is estimated that Canadian municipalities only directly tax 8 cents of every tax dollar, with 42 cents going to the provinces and the rest to the Federal Government, and that creates a fiscal imbalance," he explains. "And yet we are being asked to take on a whole gamut of water protection issues, without knowing who is going to pay for these initiatives, or how."

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The AMM will meet with the NDP caucus at 5:30 pm on Tuesday, April 22 in the Victoria/Albert room at the Delta Hotel. They will then meet individually with the Conservative and Liberal MLAs between 8:00 am and 11:30 pm on Wednesday, April 23 at the Manitoba Legislature. For more information, or to schedule an interview with President Bell, please contact the AMM.