



Contact:
Lynne Bereza, AMM Communications Coordinator
Telephone: (204) 856-2366
Cell: (204) 871-0517
Fax: (204) 856-2370
Email: bereza@amm.mb.ca
1910 Saskatchewan Avenue W.
Portage la Prairie, MB R1N 0P1

News Release

Poll shows support for 1% tax for infrastructure

November 13, 2008 - The Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) recently took part in a province-wide Omnibus survey to find out how Manitobans feel about infrastructure renewal. The survey reflects the views of 1,000 adults interviewed by Probe Research between September 15th and October 6th, 2008, and builds on the AMM's own survey of its membership.

The survey questions were designed to gauge Manitobans' attitudes towards the importance of infrastructure renewal projects, their opinion on the affordability of such projects, and their support for a 1% sales tax dedicated to infrastructure programs.

The results were overwhelming. The vast majority (94%) of Manitobans feel that municipalities in the province should give priority to infrastructure renewal projects. Even more interesting, notes AMM President Ron Bell, is that "this critical level of priority was offered by all respondents, regardless of their location or socio-demographic background. This is a problem felt in every corner of our province."

Respondents also demonstrated an acute awareness of the restrictions their municipalities are facing. More than half (55%) of respondents do not feel that their own municipal government could afford to pay for infrastructure upgrades without raising taxes or looking to other levels of government for financial support. A majority (54%) of Manitobans indicated they would support a one per cent municipal sales tax to pay for infrastructure renewal projects.

These results are no surprise to Bell. "This is not the first survey demonstrating citizens' understanding and awareness of the fiscal binds their community leaders are facing. Last year, a cross-Canada survey done by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) showed the majority of Canadians (68%) would have preferred the Federal Government had left the GST at six per cent and used the remaining funds to help municipalities improve their local infrastructure. This survey just reinforces what we already knew – most people, including Manitobans, will support what would essentially be a consumption tax, if the funds raised go directly to an area of great need. That area is infrastructure."

The complete report is available on the AMM website at www.amm.mb.ca.

