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Association of
Manitoba
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News Release

Lobby Days Receive Favourable Response

Two-day blitz of Manitoba Legislature promotes shared priorities

WINNIPEG - The Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) met with more than 30 MLAs over a two-day blitz of the Manitoba Legislature on April 19 and 20, 2005. The purpose of the meetings, coined "Lobby Days" and based on a model developed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), was to meet with backbenchers not always privy to the concerns and priorities of Manitoba municipalities. MLAs who met with the AMM included members of the Winnipeg and Rural/Northern NDP caucuses, members of the Official Opposition, and members of the Liberal party.

During the meetings, the AMM briefed the MLAs on three top priority issues: education funding from property, water and land use planning, and a new deal for municipalities. AMM President Ron Bell was pleased with the response. "We found that, regardless of political stripe, education funding from property is a shared concern," noted Bell. "Virtually every MLA we spoke to acknowledged the need for further improvements in this area. While this has been the number one concern of our members for several years, having it recognized by so many MLAs in such a short period of time really confirms we are on the right track with this issue."

The AMM also filled the members in on their push for per capita funding of new deal money. While the AMM is pleased with the commitment on the part of the Federal Government of \$167 million over the next five years and \$20 million this year to Manitoba cities and communities, a method of distribution has yet to be decided upon for Manitoba. "We believe this funding should be distributed on a per capita basis, as it is the quickest and cleanest way to get the money into the hands of the communities that need it," said Bell. "Many of the MLAs we spoke to were interested in hearing more about this issue, and concurred that per capita only seems reasonable as every municipality has infrastructure needs, regardless of size."

The brief presented to MLAs during Lobby Days is available on the AMM website at www.amm.mb.ca.