

News Release

AMM meets with Finance Minister, Greg Selinger, as part of 2004 budget consultation

BSE, drought and infrastructure top list of funding requests

Portage la Prairie, November 6, 2003 – Today, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) met with Finance Minister, Greg Selinger, to discuss several important issues municipalities would like to see addressed in the Minister's provincial budget for 2004.

"Our annual budget consultation meeting with the Minister of Finance gives our organization a chance to discuss the top funding priorities of Manitoba's municipalities," said AMM President, Stuart Briese.

With the BSE and drought problem hitting a crisis point this summer, the AMM urged the Minister to participate in a federally/provincially -funded cash advance program and a mature breeding stock program to ensure the survival of Manitoba's livestock industry.

"Many of Manitoba's municipalities have been hit hard during the BSE and drought crisis. The AMM would like to see the Province step in and provide relief to cattle producers through a cash advance program," said President Briese. "Furthermore, the BSE and drought crisis in Manitoba this year has highlighted the fact that the current property tax base for municipalities is not sustainable in providing communities with fundamental services. The City of Winnipeg's 'New Deal' demonstrates the need to review municipal revenue sources to fill this infrastructure gap, which is not only felt in Winnipeg, but in all municipalities around Manitoba."

The AMM outlined several infrastructure areas to the Minister that need more funding, including drainage, recreational facilities, natural gas expansion, rural water infrastructure and increased Internet access.

Other areas the AMM discussed with the Minister were: the need for additional environmental and planning officers if any new intensive livestock legislation were introduced; implementation and funding for the water strategy; adequate funding for the Household Hazardous Waste Program; and, increased funding for libraries, housing, palliative care, and the highways capital budget.

Copies of the submission are available on the AMM Web site at www.amm.mb.ca/policies. President Briese will be available for comment following the presentation at 1:30 p.m. Please call Cindy Miller, Communications Coordinator, at 204.856.2366.

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