

P RESIDENT'S MESSAGE



On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM), I am pleased to present our 2003/2004 Annual Report. This report represents our sixth year as an organization and reflects many of the activities over the past year.

This report holds special significance for me as it represents my final year as President of the AMM, a post I have held for the past three years. It is gratifying to see some of the accomplishments we've made over the past year, even more so to see commitments made several years ago come to fruition.

Provincially, some of the major pieces of legislation the AMM spent the year dealing with included The Planning Amendment Act, The Local Authorities Election Act, and The Gas Tax Accountability Act. The AMM was pleased to see single-tier assistance come into effect on June 1, 2004, after four years of negotiations. Our annual meeting with the Premier and the Provincial Cabinet allowed us to discuss a great number of other issues, as detailed on pages 11-15 of this report.

Federally, the AMM lobbied very hard, over the past year, for a New Deal for municipalities. I am very pleased with the direction the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is taking with regard to infrastructure needs and the federal fuel tax. I believe municipalities can expect a new infrastructure program early in the next year. The move to rebating 100% of the GST to municipalities is another positive step.

The AMM also played a major role in the BSE situation. A meeting between the Prairie Association of Rural Municipalities (PARM) and a number of government officials in Ottawa, including the Federal Finance Minister, last March was very successful. This meeting served to open the lines of communication and also helped, I believe, to influence the Federal government's level of financial assistance provided to deal with the BSE crisis.

I am extremely proud of our working relationship with the other two levels of government. These relationships have been built on trust, and our reputation for approaching issues directly and candidly has resulted in a mutual respect between the AMM and the other levels of government.

In addition to our lobbying activities, the AMM's membership services continued to grow over the past year. The Municipalities Trading Company of Manitoba Ltd. (MTCML) again provided a rebate to our members, bringing the total that municipalities have received out of the Trading Company to \$900,000 over the past three years. We also greatly increased our professional development programs for our membership, both in quantity and quality. The AMM recognizes the changing and challenging roles of municipal councils, and has invested in programs to support these roles. Other commitments made at the beginning of my term included enhanced communications with our membership and increased media presence. Both have been achieved. We also added a database of active resolutions that is second to none.

Finally, the success of our Association could not have been accomplished without the excellent work of our Board of Directors and staff. Their commitment and dedication to the work of the AMM is commendable. In the coming year, they will continue to work on many of the priority issues affecting municipalities, including education taxes on property, affordable housing programs, the extended scope of the retail sales tax, and others. There is no doubt in my mind that the outstanding relationship between the AMM and our members will continue to grow and prosper, as will the communities we serve.

On a personal note, I want to thank you all for your continued support and confidence in my abilities over the past three years. I am proud of what the AMM has accomplished during my tenure, and I am confident that the Association will continue to be a driving force for strong and effective municipal government in Manitoba.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stuart Briese". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stuart Briese
President