

Education Funding and a New Deal *AMM's top issues discussed with ministers*

Each year, the AMM meets with every Provincial Minister. These meetings involve discussing specific issues under each of the Minister's portfolios. However, two issues have been discussed at every meeting this year: education funding and a New Deal for municipalities.

Education Funding

The proportion of education funding coming from property taxes is the AMM's number one issue of concern. And, it will continue to be a major issue for local governments in the coming year. Many school divisions have increased local levies this year, placing further pressure on local ratepayers.

While the AMM is pleased to see that a \$27 million reduction in the Education Support Levy (ESL) has been achieved since 1999, the AMM also believes that a new formula must be developed that would decrease property tax support for education while not diminishing the quality of education that Manitoba youth receive. The AMM continues to urge the Province to adopt a stable and sustainable funding ratio of 80 per cent from Provincial general revenues and 20 per cent levied by local school boards.

As a member of the Minister's Working Group on Education Finance, the AMM is pleased that the final report has now been released, and looks forward to discussing the recommendations in the report with the Province.

A New Deal for Municipalities

While the City of Winnipeg has initiated substantial discussion on this issue in Manitoba, the AMM believes there are important ramifications for all Municipal Governments as all Manitoba communities have concerns about the ability of the current system of taxation to meet municipal financial obligations. Many

municipalities across Manitoba are struggling because their resources have not kept pace with their growing physical and social infrastructure responsibilities.

The root of the problem is the gap between the services that municipalities must provide and the resources at their disposal. Municipal Governments in Canada currently earn 54% of their revenue through property taxation, a revenue stream that does not increase in times of economic growth.

In addition, increasing school division levies have resulted in Municipal Governments maintaining current levels of property taxation to respond to ratepayer demands, leaving municipalities with less revenue to maintain property services.

The AMM is pleased that the Federal Government has raised the municipal GST rebate to 100 per cent and has also committed greater funds to existing infrastructure programs. There are also suggestions that municipalities may receive a portion of the federal fuel excise tax. There is much that the Province of Manitoba can do as well, including the decision to pass all Provincial fuel tax back to transportation infrastructure, under the Gas Tax Accountability Act.

However, there is much more that needs to be done to address the growing revenue needs of Municipal Governments in Manitoba. The AMM looks forward to working with the Province to make a new revenue deal for municipalities a reality for local governments across Manitoba. ■



Municipal Visits— Parklands

This week, representatives from the AMM met with councils from several Parklands district municipalities to discuss issues the AMM board has been working on in recent months, and to hear from the councils regarding the issues facing that district.

"Municipal visits are important to the AMM because they offer us the chance to meet our members from a specific region and communicate on a more individual level with them" notes AMM President Stuart Briese.

Some of the issues raised by the Parklands district municipalities were education funding from property taxes, by-law enforcement, and tax sharing between municipalities. Issues the AMM updated the district on included infrastructure funding, water management, and planning legislation.

Representatives from the AMM included Briese, Rural Parklands District Director Albert Nabe, Urban Parklands District Director Lorne Boguski, Urban Vice-President Ron Bell, Rural Vice-President Garry Wasylofski, and Executive Director Joe Masi.

The municipalities included in these visits were the R.M. and City of Dauphin, R.M. and Town of Ste. Rose du Lac, R.M. of Shell River, R.M. of Ochre River, R.M. and Town of Gilbert Plains, R.M. and Town of Grandview, R.M. of Alonsa, and the Town of Roblin. ■

Visit our website:

www.amm.mb.ca

Notices

Welcome...

The AMM is pleased to welcome *Donna Belbin* as the new Events Coordinator, effective Monday, August 9, 2004. Donna has over 20 years of experience working for Canad Inns. Donna can be reached at 856-2374.

Farewell...

The AMM is sorry to say farewell to *Erin Boutang*, Community Services Policy Analyst. Erin has accepted a position with Intergovernmental Affairs. The AMM Board and Staff appreciates all of Erin's hard work during her time here. We will miss you, Erin!

Congratulations

Congratulations to *Rachel Philippe*, who will be moving into the position of Community Services Policy Analyst. Rachel is currently the Property Services Policy Analyst.

Reminder

Retail Sales Tax Survey

The Provincial Government has decided to expand the scope of the Retail Sales Act to include legal, accounting, engineering, architectural and security services. To better understand the impact this decision will have on municipal bottom lines, we mailed all Municipalities a survey in late July. Once we compile the results of the survey, we will be taking it forward to the Province to express our displeasure with this decision.

Please return your completed survey to AMM Director of Policy and Communications Tyler MacAfee no later than **September 10, 2004**.

Coming Events

Land Management in Local Communities: Challenges and Opportunities for First Nations – Municipal Government Relations

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), in partnership with the Indian Taxation Advisory Board, the Lands Advisory Board, the National Aboriginal Land Managers' Association, with support from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, has undertaken a project to enhance communication between First Nations and municipal governments on the federal Additions to Reserve (ATR) policy and the First Nations Land Management Act (FNLMA). The project centers on the creation of a land management toolkit, which will include model agreements and best practices for use by First Nations and local governments across Canada.

To generate feedback on the toolkit, and to provide information on the FNLMA and the ATR policy process, a free workshop will be held on:

August 25, 2004 - Victoria Inn & Suites in Brandon, Manitoba

The workshop will:

- examine the advantages and challenges of developing partnerships on land management from both a First Nations and municipal government perspective;
- identify opportunities for partnerships in economic development, land use, public works and resource management;
- present model agreements and best practices from local communities;
- review service delivery and tax loss compensation agreements, as well as dispute resolution processes.

These workshops will be of interest to elected officials, land managers, and others interested in improving or establishing effective communications with First Nations living on reserve within or adjacent to their municipality.

To register, contact Lindsay Hopkins at (613) 241-5221 ext. 311 or lhopkins@fcm.ca

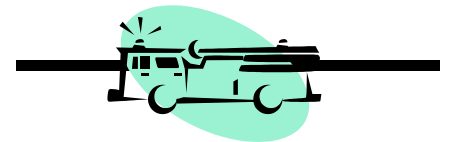
For Sale

Fire Truck R.M. of St. Andrews

The RM of St. Andrews has a 1988 GMC Villager Cross Control fire truck for sale. Asking price is \$80,000.00/

For more information contact:

**RM of St. Andrews
Box 130
Clandeboye, MB R0C 0P0
Phone: 204-738-2264 or
1-866-738-2264 Fax: 738-2500
Email: office@rmofstandrews.com**



Fire Truck R.M. of North Norfolk

The R.M. of North Norfolk has a 1978 Chevrolet C65 Fire Truck for sale by tender.

Sealed tender marked "Fire Truck" must be received by 4:00 p.m. September 3, 2004. Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

This unit can be viewed at the Austin Fire Hall or visit our website at **www.rm.north-norfolk.mb.ca** to view a picture and obtain further details on the unit.

For more information call the R.M. of North Norfolk at 204-685-2211.



Contact the Association of Manitoba Municipalities

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