

PARM spend busy day in Ottawa

On Tuesday, March 9, AMM President Stuart Briese, along with Jack Hayden, President of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts & Counties and Neal Hardy, President of the Saskatchewan Association Rural Municipalities, representing the Prairie Association of Rural Municipalities (PARM), spent a busy day meeting with various government officials in Ottawa.

The first meeting was with the Liberal Rural Caucus where the three Presidents discussed Paul Martin's New Deal for Municipalities. "I am very pleased with the way the discussions went," said Briese. "I'm excited about the things that may come from a new deal."

The Presidents then met with the Chief of Staff of Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada as well as other senior officials to talk about the BSE crisis. Discussions centred on the reopening of the border and a potential financial package for the cattle industry.

The next meeting of the day was with Minister of Finance Ralph Goodale. Again the discussion focused on BSE, and possible bridge funding to carry the industry for the next few months was discussed. This meeting was followed by a presentation to the Standing Committee on Agriculture that highlighted the impacts of the BSE crisis on Western Canada.

The AMM will be following up on these issues directly with the federal government as well as through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM).

Minister Meeting continue

On February 18, the AMM met with Jim Rondeau, Minister of Healthy Living and Minister responsible for Seniors, and Ron Lemieux, Minister of Transportation and Government Services.

The meeting with Minister Rondeau began with the AMM asking for an overview of the new department. In his capacity as Minister responsible for seniors, the AMM stressed the importance of independent living for seniors as well as funding for seniors housing programs and tax exemption issues around life-lease condominiums. The Minister indicated that he is looking at funding for programs dealing with independent living for seniors as well as federal money for a housing program. The Minister also indicated he would work with the AMM on the life-lease tax exemption issue.

The AMM also discussed the upcoming West Nile virus program and some of the problems that occurred with last year's program. The AMM encouraged the Minister to take municipal input into consideration for next year's program.

At the meeting with Minister Lemieux, the AMM discussed the need for the Province to make a serious commitment to the transportation system in Manitoba by addressing the current \$3.4 billion deficit. The AMM did express appreciation for the Province's commitment to reinvest fuel taxes into transportation infrastructure.

The AMM also urged the Province to move forward with the implementation of the Vision 20/20 initiative and the commitment to twinning the rest of the Trans-Canada highway. The AMM also asked for an update on the Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program (SHIP) and expressed appreciation for the Province's work with the Prairie Grain Roads Program (PGRP).

As with all Minister Meetings, the AMM discussed education taxes and a new deal for municipalities with both Ministers.

The AMM will be following up shortly with each Minister on all issues that were brought forward at these meetings. Copies of the position papers presented to the Ministers are available on the AMM website at amm.mb.ca/provministermeetings

New Planning Act changes good for municipalities

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) was pleased with the Provincial Government's announcement on March 11 regarding the proposed amendments to the Planning Act, and specifically with the livestock-related changes.

Bill 40: The Planning Amendment Act ensures that decision-making will remain at the local level while placing the monitoring and enforcement of environmental issues with the Province.

"These proposed changes pertain directly to several AMM resolutions dealing with the Intensive Livestock Issue," said Briese. "Now municipalities can build

their livestock operations policy into their development plans providing clarity for the municipality, their rate payers as well as the Provincial government."

Other highlights from The Planning Amendment Act include: mandatory planning, a required livestock operations policy for municipalities, enhanced notice provisions for intensive livestock operations, and an amendment to existing provincial land use policies. Look for these changes to be discussed at the AMM's Mayors, Reeves & CAO meetings next week.

Municipalities participate in rendering meetings

Last week, the AMM along with representatives from the Provincial Government, conducted six regional meetings across Manitoba to explore regional options for the disposal of deadstock, offal and butcher waste in the new post-BSE environment. The six meetings, held in Steinbach, Stonewall, Portage la Prairie, Brandon, Dauphin and Minnedosa, were attended by close to half of Manitoba's municipalities. The meetings began with a presentation by Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives and were followed by a question and answer session. Those in attendance were then broken into smaller groups to discuss the issues raised in the presentation in greater detail. The groups were then asked to report back to the whole group.

Some issues that arose from these meetings were costs of starting a disposal project as well as providing and maintaining this service. Municipalities also asked what role the Province would play in this issue and how long it would take once a regional site was selected and agreed to by the Province.

The AMM has compiled all the information from these meetings and will continue to work on this issue. Look for this topic to be discussed at the AMM's Mayors, Reeves & CAO meetings in the next two weeks.

From the AMM Office ...

Notices

The Compost Action Project of Resource Conservation Manitoba

Practical Strategies for a Home Composting Program: Toolkit for Manitoba Communities is now available from The Compost Action Project of Resource Conservation

Manitoba.* This new publication will assist municipalities to plan, develop and implement organics programs. Did you know that a Home Compost Program has the potential to divert 35% of residential organics at significant cost savings over landfilling or depot collection?

To order your copy, contact the Compost Action Project toll-free at 1-866-394-8880, or email rcm@mb.sympatico.ca. For more information about this new tool, visit our website at www.resourceconservation.mb.ca/cap/resources.html.

*Formerly the Recycling Council of Manitoba

Spring Road Restrictions 2004

Interested municipalities can obtain a copy of the Spring Road Restriction order by visiting the website: www.gov.mb.ca/tgs/transreg/compreg/spring-restrict.html, contacting Compliance and Regulatory Services at 204.945.3961 or 204.945.3890, or contacting Regional Transportation and Government Services offices and weigh stations.

CMHC Affordable Housing Programs Workshop

You are invited to attend a Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) affordable housing programs workshops in Winnipeg on March 17 or in Brandon on March 18. The workshops will focus on CMHC's Seed Funding, Proposal Development Fund, and Capacity Development Training programs and on Mortgage Insurance for homeownership projects. The workshops will profile housing projects in Manitoba, which have been successful in obtaining program funding and will provide advice on how to apply for program support. CMHC staff in attendance will also be able to highlight housing research and information, which may be of assistance in developing a housing project. The workshop will be of interest to builders, developers,

nonprofit housing corporations, community groups, and municipal officials.

The Winnipeg workshop will be held at the Clarion Hotel, B.C. Room, 1445 Portage Ave. at 1:30 PM on Mar.17.

The Brandon workshop will be held at the Trails West Motor Inn, 210 - 18th Street North at 10:00 AM on March 18.

Space is limited. Please call Natalie Oliver in the CMHC Winnipeg office at 204.983.5601 or advise by e-mail at noliver@cmhc.ca to confirm your attendance.

Community Festivals Support Program

Applications for 2004 northern and rural Manitoba summer festivals are being accepted under the Community Festivals Support Program until April 1. For further information contact Recreation and Regional Services at 204.945.3766.

Attorney General Safer Communities Awards

Nominations are invited for this year's Manitoba Attorney General Safer Communities Awards, which recognize individuals, and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to crime prevention in the province in the past year.

Nomination forms can be obtained by calling the Awards Steering Committee of Manitoba Justice at 204.945.1549 or toll free at 1.800.282.8069 ext. 1549.

MTCML

Tax Envelopes

It's that time of year again! So don't forget to contact Doris Klippenstein

at 204.856.2367 to order your tax envelopes.