

Communities Receive \$14 Million Infrastructure Boost under MRIF

Rural and Northern Manitoba will benefit from more than a dozen new projects jointly announced June 3, 2005 by the governments of Canada and Manitoba. Included in the \$14-million investment under the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF) are two broadband networks for more than 90 communities in the Parklands area and Northern Manitoba, and 12 municipal infrastructure projects that will significantly upgrade municipal wastewater treatment systems.

The Rural/Northern Federal Provincial Local Consultative Committee (FPLCC) on Infrastructure recommended the connectivity and green projects to MRIF. FPLCC is a local government body created to provide input in the project selection process for MRIF. AMM's Executive, including President Ron Bell, Rural Vice President Garry Wasylowski, and Urban Vice President Lorne Boguski, sit on the FPLCC.

"As a member of the local consultative committee, choosing projects was an arduous process, because we received so many worthwhile applications," said Bell. "Every application had merit because every municipality has very pressing infrastructure needs. Connectivity projects are so important to our communities, who face many obstacles in trying to achieve an effective level of global communication. Green projects are hugely important to

....continued on page two

AMM Makes Presentations on Bills 36, 25

On May 31, 2005, the AMM attended the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs to make a presentation on **Bill 36: The Courts Administration Improvement Act**.

In this bill, the section of most importance to municipalities is the changes to the Summary Convictions Act. Municipal governments are charged with the responsibility of administering local affairs through bylaws, and for these bylaws to be effective they must be enforceable. Currently, the only way for municipalities to ensure that fines are paid is to take the matter through the provincial court system. This process is time-consuming, costly, and ties up the criminal court system in simple bylaw matters. The AMM's opinion is that it does not make sense for municipalities to chase unpaid fines as the amount owing does not cover the actual costs of this course of action.

The AMM participated on a stakeholder committee that explored the options available to municipalities. The committee found that removing the initial stages of the bylaw enforcement process from the court system will greatly reduce the cost associated with enforcement. The AMM is pleased that Bill 36 proposes to change the Summary Convictions Act to allow municipalities to appoint screening officers to oversee the initial stages of the process, which will greatly reduce the costs of enforcement and free up criminal courts to deal with criminal matters.

The AMM trusts that the changes brought about by Bill 36 will address many of the inadequacies of the current system and will allow municipalities to enforce bylaws in a cost effective manner.

June 2, 2005 saw the AMM attend the Standing Committee on Human Resources to present on **Bill 25: The Workers Compensation Amendment Act**.

Manitoba municipalities have for years urged the Provincial Government to review how volunteer firefighters are treated under the Workers Compensation Act. The primary concern is that part-time, volunteer firefighters are not treated equally under the current legislation when it comes to diseases caused by providing firefighting services. In many communities, it is the part-time firefighters that provide the firefighting services and face the hazardous situations. For this reason, we have urged the Provincial Government to add part-time firefighters to the coverage offered to full-time firefighters, and we are very satisfied to see coverage extended under this Bill. The AMM has begun discussions with the Provincial Department to look at the costs associated with extending coverage and the best ways to balance the costs for municipalities.

The AMM is also pleased to see that Bill 25 includes the allowance for private top-ups of WCB benefits for part-time firefighters. Many municipalities simply cannot afford full-time fire departments and in these cases, they rely on volunteers to provide local firefighting services. Bill 25 also proposes to remove the maximum earnings clause and the AMM supports this as well, as this will help attract volunteers and guarantee that those who make a commitment to the community will not be penalized financially should an accident occur.

Volunteers are the life-blood of many communities and it is important that they are compensated to the fullest should an accident occur. The AMM is pleased to see measures in place that extend compensation for occupational diseases to part-time, volunteer firefighters and that allow for private top-ups above WCB coverage for volunteer firefighters. ■

June District Meetings

Resolution Deadline

June 9, 2005

Please submit all duly passed resolutions for consideration at the June District Meetings by **June 9, 2005** to:

Tyler MacAfee, AMM Director of Policy & Communications
Ph: (204) 856-2362
Email: tmacafee@amm.mb.ca

Dates & Locations

NORTHERN DISTRICT

The Pas Regional Library (Annex)
53 Edwards Avenue, The Pas, MB

Monday, June 13, 2005

PARKLANDS DISTRICT

Roblin Community Centre
55 6th Avenue NE., Roblin, MB

Tuesday June 14, 2005

MIDWESTERN DISTRICT

Plumas Memorial Community Centre
303 Jordan Street E., Plumas, MB

Wednesday, June 15, 2005

EASTERN DISTRICT

Whitemouth Community Hall
1st Street, Whitemouth, MB

Monday, June 20, 2005

INTERLAKE DISTRICT

Fraserwood Hall
Southside of PR 231, Fraserwood, MB

Tuesday, June 21, 2005

CENTRAL DISTRICT

Heartland Resort & Conference Centre,
851 Main Street, Winkler, MB

Wednesday, June 22, 2005

WESTERN DISTRICT

Glenboro Kinsmen Community Hall
Railway Avenue West @ Fairgrounds
Glenboro, MB

Thursday, June 23, 2005

**See you at the 2005
June District Meetings**

MTCMLOfficial Supplier



CD Awards

*Products Available :
Awards, name badges,
desk plates, en-
graving, photos etc.*

**A wide selection to choose from...
ask for a catalogue!**

Call : 204-834-2429

MERX Advertising

MERX is the most complete source of public tenders in Canada. The AMM will post tenders on behalf of municipalities on the MERX website. The cost for this service is \$40 + GST.

Please send a brief description of the tender, closing date & time, and contact information to:

Patti De Baets
Finance Coordinator
Ph: 204-856-2367
Email: pdebaets@amm.mb.ca



**Who's Guarding
the Municipal
Chequebook?**

**Presented by:
Len Wood**

**Registration Fee:
\$170 per delegate**

Friday October 7th 2005
9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Registration & Coffee at 8:15 a.m.
Clarion Inn & Suites – 1445 Portage
Avenue, Winnipeg
To register, please contact:

Donna Belbin at 204-856-2374
Email: dbelbin@amm.mb.ca

Reminders

AMM Member Surveys



The AMM recently emailed our members two surveys. The first was on **AMM Education Programs** and the other is about **saving money on your fuel purchases**.

Please take a few minutes to fill out the surveys and send them back to us. Your feedback is important to ensure our programs are as valuable and cost efficient for *you*, our members, as possible.

If you would like us to re-send either survey, please call the AMM office at:

204-856-2365 or
email amm@amm.mb.ca

Infrastructure boost

cont'd from page one

the management of our waste and the protection of our precious resources. Roads, tourism, recreation...all are important to the health and vitality of our communities, and all received equal consideration throughout this process," Bell explained.

Consisting of matching one-third federal, provincial, and local contributions in most cases, the MRIF will invest \$120 million in communities across Manitoba. Twenty per cent of the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund is for communities with a population of over 250,000, and the remaining eighty per cent is for the other 198 municipalities and 50 unincorporated Northern Community Councils in rural and northern Manitoba.

For more information, visit:

www.infrastructure.gc.ca or
www.infrastructure.mb.ca