



Member Advisory

PROVINCIAL BUDGET 2006 – MUNICIPAL HIGHLIGHTS

March 7, 2006 – President Ron Bell attended the reading of Budget 2006 yesterday at the Manitoba Legislature. Following are the municipal highlights from this year's budget:

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Education Tax – Yesterday's budget completely eliminated the education support levy (ESL), and increased the farmland tax rebate to 60%. There was also a commitment to further reductions in upcoming budgets.

Building Manitoba Fund – This fund (initially announced last year) increased by 6% overall. The total increase of \$7.9M includes \$3.4M for rural Manitoba and \$4.5M for Winnipeg.

New Recreation Centre and Library Infrastructure Fund - \$1.7M of the rural increase will go to this fund this year, and there is a commitment of \$5.3 M next year for this fund.

Water Issues – The drainage budget is doubled from \$1.9M to \$3.8M. There is also increased funding for flood protection, a small increase in funding for CDs, and the doubling of soil survey teams.

Economic Development – There is support for bio-fuels, immigration funding, and funding for oil and gas exploration. In addition, the Churchill Gateway funding will continue.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- Minor funding increase for the *Emergency Measure Organization*
- Funding to fight *crystal methamphetamine*
- More training spots for doctors
- New *Physical Activity Credit*
- *Aging in Place* strategy funding
- More support for cultural festivals
- New police officers for *Winnipeg, Brandon and First Nations*

WHAT WASN'T IN THE BUDGET

Education Tax – There were no reductions announced for commercial class, and no 5-year plan was announced.

Water – There appears to be no increase in dedicated funding for the development of Integrated Water Management Plans (IWMPs). As well, while drainage funding is positive there was no mention of a provincial water management plan with accompanying funding.

Other – There are no new police officer positions outside Winnipeg, Brandon and First Nations this year. (It should be noted, however that all spots announced last year still haven't been filled.)

Neighbourhoods Alive! Program – This program has not been expanded beyond the three communities it currently serves.

PLEASE NOTE:

*This represents the AMM's initial review of this year's provincial budget.
We will provide further details to you as we receive them.*
