



# Member Advisory

## THRONE SPEECH 2006 – MUNICIPAL HIGHLIGHTS

**November 20, 2006** – Last week, the new session of the Manitoba Legislature opened with the Throne Speech. The AMM was in attendance and we were pleased to see a number of long standing AMM resolutions addressed in the Throne Speech. Here are the municipal highlights:

### HIGHLIGHTS

**Infrastructure** – A top issue for municipalities, the AMM was pleased to see it play a prominent role in the speech. Touted as the “largest investment in infrastructure ever made in Manitoba,” the speech made a \$4 billion commitment over the next 10 years for Manitoba highways.

**Inter-facility Patient Transfers** – The speech commits to removing fees for inter-facility ambulance trips, a resolution the AMM has been working on since 1999.

**Review of RHA system** - There is a commitment to commission an external management review of the RHA initiative, an AMM resolution since 2004.

**Neighbourhoods Alive! Program** – This program will be expanded beyond just Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson to include other communities across Manitoba. The AMM has been actively lobbying to have this program expanded since 2003 and has made it clear that this needs to be new funding, so those current communities do not see a loss.

**Libraries** – There is a funding commitment for libraries, an active resolution since 1999.

**Food Costs in Northern Manitoba** – The Province will test a new form of truck transport “Rocky Mountain Doubles,” similar to the AMM resolution passed at the 2004 Convention. There is also a commitment to increase the Northern Food Allowance to help families in remote communities pay for higher costs of healthy food, something the AMM has been lobbying for since 2002.

### WHAT WASN'T IN THE SPEECH

An issue that failed to be clarified in the Throne Speech is the responsibilities of implementing the requirements of the Water Protection Act. While stricter standards were mentioned, the speech failed to make a firm commitment to assist with the funding of the proposed requirements.

Municipal budgets are stretched too thin already and municipalities cannot be left to fund this alone.

We will be continuing to deliver this message to government and look forward to a commitment in the 2007 Budget.

### OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- A commitment to add resources to help police maintain a greater presence in Manitoba communities
- 5 additional *Lighthouses* will be added, which provide safe and fun places for youth to go in the evenings
- Expansion of the *Turnabout* program, which provides both help and firm consequences for kids under the age of 12 who are not subject to federal youth laws
- Enhanced training of health care professionals
- Continued commitment to developing wind power, which presents economic development opportunities for rural communities
- Maintaining the commitment of \$7M for recreation option in rural and northern Manitoba
- Continued commitment of funds to clean up contaminated areas, including orphaned petroleum sites and abandoned mines
- \$50M for Winnipeg regional roads and bicycle routes
- The speech committed \$12.6M to cost-share transit on a 50-50 basis with municipalities and also \$5.4M for handi-transit vehicles throughout Manitoba from the federal Bill C-48 funding

***This Throne Speech sets out what could be a promising legislative session for municipalities and now the AMM's task is to ensure the Province delivers on its commitments.***