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Doug Dobrowolski, President

Speaking with ONE UNITED VOICE

The lazy days of summer are upon us and yet for many, they are anything but relaxing. Flooding and forest fires continue to challenge communities throughout the province. Plentiful rains have ensured plentiful mosquitoes, and it would certainly not be summer in Manitoba without road construction and detours.

AMM members have been tested in other ways as well, and the 50 resolutions carried at our June District Meetings support this statement. Many of these resolutions will be brought forward to our 12th Annual Convention in Winnipeg this November and, if carried, will form the AMM's lobbying position throughout 2011. And if anyone doubts the power of those resolutions to achieve success for our members, one need only look to the sewage ejector situation for confirmation.

Last fall, the AMM was disappointed the Province proceeded with aggressive amendments to the Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulation despite the widespread and very vocal objection of AMM members. A few short months later, in an excellent example of what our association can do by working together, the Province changed the regulation to allow ejectors on properties over 10 acres. Urban and rural municipalities spoke out in opposition to this regulation and the government listened.

I would like to thank Premier Selinger and Minister Blaikie for listening to our concerns and addressing them in the new regulation. But most of all, I want to thank you, our members. We were in the face of government on this issue and truly spoke with one united voice. The way our membership rallied around this issue really showed the strength we possess as a group.

Time will only tell whether we will have similar success with our push for equal rights for municipal officials while

in council meetings. Currently, legal action cannot be taken against an MP or MLA for words spoken in their respective chambers, however this immunity does not extend to municipal politicians. And this legal action can continue well beyond your time on council.


We have seen a trend lately where the Province has been pushing for harder rules governing municipal officials, in particular with recent changes to the conflict of interest and election rules. These changes were done almost overnight, yet on many of our issues there is reluctance by government to take action.

And yet, we have seen that change CAN occur when we speak with one voice. That is why we will continue to push the Province to give municipal officials equal rights as those enjoyed by MPs and MLAs.

With a municipal election coming up in October, this issue is even more top of mind. Elected office is a hard job at the best of times, but onerous new rules and the threat of lawsuits are a deterrent not only to those new to municipal politics, but to those seeking re-election as well. Many current mayors, Reeves and councillors are still undecided as to whether they will run again this October, and with good reason. It is another ball to juggle and requires many sacrifices.

However, municipal politics has great rewards, too. We see progress made, projects completed, and ideas become reality. There is simply no better place to affect change and make your voice heard than on your local council.

And of course, when your local council joins forces with the other 197 members of the AMM, that voice is even stronger.

Have a great summer! 

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