

News Release

Tour highlights infrastructure deficiencies

Lack of potable water “a quality of life issue”

August 30, 2011 – The Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) wrapped up its President’s Tour of Manitoba last week with stops in Portage la Prairie and Lorette. The tour was part of the AMM’s “Putting Communities First” campaign and included earlier visits to Dauphin, Gimli and Brandon.

Designed to send a strong message to all parties in the days leading up to the October 4 provincial election, the tour saw AMM President, Doug Dobrowolski, meet with elected officials, community leaders and candidates to hear the most pressing infrastructure issues across Manitoba and deliver this message to all parties: Manitoba’s communities need help.

“What we heard in both Portage la Prairie and Lorette was consistent with the other stops on the tour – economic development is stagnating because communities are unable to provide the infrastructure necessary for housing,” said Dobrowolski. “There are developers lined up ready to build the needed single-family, low-income, and seniors housing, and they are being turned away because there is no serviced land.” This has dire results for a community like Lorette, which should be poised for growth but is instead seeing a decline in school enrollments due to lack of housing. “How can municipalities fund new water and sewer infrastructure for housing when they can’t even afford to repair the old lines they already have?” asked Dobrowolski.

Provincial downloading was another recurring issue throughout the tour. The City of Portage la Prairie’s mandated regulations for water treatment and nutrient removal from wastewater is expected to cost \$25 million. The RM of Portage la Prairie is still reeling from the spring flood and not only faces serious drainage and water management issues, but is unable to provide clean drinking water to many of its citizens.

“Throughout rural Manitoba, supplying potable water for residents is a huge issue,” explains Dobrowolski. “Rural water lines need to be expanded and municipalities just do not have the money. This is not just an infrastructure issue—it is a quality of life issue.”

Currently, 70 per cent of Manitoba municipalities have passed resolutions calling on all parties to commit a portion of existing PST revenue to repairing and upgrading the infrastructure in Manitoba communities.

-30-

View submitted resolutions: <http://www.amm.mb.ca/campaigncentre/about.cfm>

Read recaps of the AMM President’s Tour: <http://www.amm.mb.ca/blog/?cat=10>

Visit the AMM Campaign Centre: <http://www.amm.mb.ca/campaigncentre/>