

News Release

128 municipalities on board

Aging water and sewer lines breaking budgets across Manitoba

August 23, 2011 – The Association of Manitoba Municipalities' (AMM) "Putting Communities First" campaign is now in full swing with 128, or 65% of Manitoba's municipalities having passed resolutions in support of the movement. The resolutions call on all parties to commit, if elected, a portion of existing PST revenue to repairing and upgrading the infrastructure in Manitoba communities.

Streets and roads continue to be high priorities in 55 per cent of communities and 50 per cent have water and wastewater projects requiring attention. That figure is evenly split between water and sewer mains and water and wastewater treatment facilities.

Designed to send a strong message to all parties in the days leading up to the October 4 provincial election, the campaign also kicked off a tour last week that saw AMM President, Doug Dobrowolski, meet with elected officials, community leaders and candidates in Dauphin, Gimli and Brandon. The purpose of the *President's Tour* is to hear the most pressing infrastructure issues across Manitoba and deliver the message to all parties that Manitoba's communities need help.

"Gimli is facing a huge expense for infrastructure – water line replacement alone is a \$10 million job," said Dobrowolski. "These lines were installed in the 1950s and they are costing the town \$100,000 a year just in repairs. The Public Works staff told us they recently responded to eight water main breaks in just one day. Gimli also still owes almost \$8 million on their sewage treatment facility that will mature in 2032. Where is a community of 5,000 people supposed to find the money for these things?" he questioned.

Brandon faces similar issues, as 20% of its water mains are over a century old. The City estimates it needs \$165 million just to fix its hard infrastructure. That figure doesn't include needed new infrastructure.

As for Dauphin, the area's roads are in need of serious repair, but even more pressing is the issue of connectivity, with cellular service and high speed internet topping the list of concerns.

Dobrowolski will wrap up the tour this week by visiting Portage la Prairie on Thursday and Lorette on Friday.

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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>

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