



TOP ELECTION PRIORITY: FUELLING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITH NEW 'PARTNERS IN GROWTH' INITIATIVE

AMM Points to Major Contributions by Municipalities to Provincial Economy

Selkirk, MB – July 23, 2019 – Manitoba municipalities continue to achieve landmark levels of growth, contributing over \$16 Billion to the provincial economy, according to the 137 member strong Manitoba Association of Municipalities (AMM).

"We're clearly on the grow," said AMM President, Ralph Groening, "with municipalities outside of Winnipeg contributing a full 35% to Manitoba's total GDP."

He said these municipalities also boast over 12,000 businesses, some of the fastest growing communities in Canada, others that are attracting massive investments from large multinationals, or seeing the largest residential growth in decades. At the same time, Winnipeg also continues to experience rapid growth with residential and non-residential building permits up 20.6% and 28.4% respectively, based on 2015-2017 data.

"It's a positive trend that spells great opportunities for Manitoba," he said, "but with growth comes challenges and financial pressures often caused by municipalities having to contribute more than their share of funding – sometimes up to 50% to build the roads, water and wastewater facilities needed to move growth projects forward."

Further complicating the situation is that the province froze the level of operating, community development and policing funding at 2016 levels and eliminated a formula which provided an equivalent of the 1% share of PST revenue to municipalities.

With a provincial election on the near horizon, the AMM is calling on the next government to work as "**Partners in Growth**" by creating a Growing Manitoba Together MOU that:

- Establishes a multi-year partnership program to ensure long-term stable and predictable funding as a counterbalance to the current three-year freeze;
- Is tied to growth in Manitoba's GDP as both an incentive and a recognition of municipal efforts and increasing costs to keep Manitoba growing;
- Includes a PST rebate to municipalities, consistent with federal rebate of the GST;

- Moves to multi-year budgeting to assist with long-term planning and priority setting.

Winnipeg City Councillor, Scott Gillingham, Chair of the Finance Committee, echoed the President's call for a multi-year partnership. "Ensuring long-term, stable and predictable, growth-based funding and greater collaboration would benefit everyone," he said, "including the province, municipalities, industry stakeholders and taxpayers."

Kam Blight, Reeve of the RM of Portage la Prairie, said, "We all want to keep fueling Manitoba with strong growth and partnerships but that will take a willingness to address each other's challenges to make sure we are all part of the same, winning team when it comes to keeping Manitoba growing."

Blight said this includes acknowledging the fiscal challenges faced by all levels of government and a willingness by all to support reduction in red tape while exploring how best to deliver services in a more efficient manner.

Blight and his RM are major players in two multi-national projects – the \$400 million Roquette pea processing plant and the \$460 Million Simplot expansion, which will collectively add 250 new jobs to the municipality.

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities identifies and addresses the needs and concerns of its members in order to achieve strong and effective municipal government.

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