

News Release

Mosquito buffer zones, amalgamation costs in spotlight

November 25, 2014 – The heads of several municipal councils gathered today to highlight two key resolutions being debated during the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) 16th Annual Convention, taking place this week at the RBC Convention Centre.

AMM President Doug Dobrowolski says the two resolutions illustrate the need for municipalities, both urban and rural, to be able to make their own decisions. *“We have always argued that municipalities are the order of government closest to the people and are therefore in the best position to make decisions that affect their citizens,”* he explained. *“These two resolutions clearly show why these decision-making powers are necessary – they affect not only our quality of life and health, but our bottom-line.”*

The first resolution up for debate is “Additional Funding to Assist with Amalgamation Costs.” Reeve Debbie McMechan of the Municipality of Two Borders and Reeve Don Wiebe of the Municipality of Rhineland shared some of the costs – both tangible and intangible – municipalities are now struggling with thanks to the Province of Manitoba’s amalgamation mandate.

According to Reeve Wiebe, RM of Rhineland: *“The amalgamation process is challenging, time consuming and costly. These costs include additional office space, administration and council time, software conversion and the alignment of personnel agreements. Since this a provincial initiative, our new municipality is requesting province support with respect to these costs.”*

Reeve McMechan agrees. *“Council and the Transition Committee both feel strongly that the Manitoba Government has a responsibility to help municipalities recover expenses incurred during amalgamation.”*

A more urban issue in the spotlight this week is resolution #14, “Mosquito Buffer Zones.” This resolution is sponsored by the City of Brandon and calls on the Province of Manitoba to allow municipalities to determine the size of buffer zones in their communities.

“I know the citizens of Brandon are not alone in their desire to ease the impact of mosquitoes,” says Mayor Rick Chrest. *“We feel individual municipal councils should have the flexibility and tools to deal with this issue at the local level as required. Manitoba summers are relatively short; citizens would like to enjoy their yards and outdoor activities as much as possible.”*

The first resolutions session takes place today at 3:45 pm. All media are welcome to attend.