

MUNICIPAL

The Magazine of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities

Summer 2007

Leader

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Cover: Nutritious food is a big part of health and healthy living.

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AMM Mission Statement

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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Unprecedented invitation for your Association

On July 9, 2007, in Winnipeg, the AMM made a presentation to the annual meeting of Provincial-Territorial Ministers Responsible for Local Government. The AMM participated at the meeting at the invitation of **The Honourable Steve Ashton**, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, on behalf of all of the Ministers across Canada. This is a significant event for the AMM. While the Ministers meet annually to discuss issues that relate to their common goal of strong and viable municipalities, it is unprecedented for a municipal association to be invited to be part of the agenda. Certainly, the AMM meets with our Provincial Cabinet Ministers on an annual basis, but to be asked to speak to a captive audience of Ministers from every province and territory was nothing short of a great honour – and a great opportunity.

How did we use this opportunity? We raised what we see as some of the significant challenges facing municipalities across Canada, and how we can work with Provincial Ministers in the future to address some of these challenges. This opportunity was a good first step towards working with Provincial Local Government Ministers, on an ongoing basis, for the future health and prosperity of municipalities across Canada.

We respectfully thank Minister Ashton for the invitation; and we do hope that our ideas and suggestions are considered. The presentation is available on the AMM website at www.amm.mb.ca.

While on the subject of provincial governments, I wish to congratulate **Premier**

Gary Doer on his third term victory. The AMM enjoys an excellent working relationship with the Province and I am confident that will continue throughout this next term. At the same time, the AMM looks forward to seeing some of the promises made during the election campaign come to fruition. While we continue to push government to implement their campaign promises, it is notable that some of the ideas that would be most beneficial to municipalities, and address some of the outstanding AMM resolutions, cross party lines. Will we push for those ideas to be looked at as well, regardless of which party promised them? Absolutely.

As you know, June District Meetings have come and gone and with them, another round of elections for AMM District Directors. I bid farewell to long-time Northern Director **Bert Lagimodiere**, whose presence at the AMM board table was valued and will be sorely missed. I also wish the best to **William Danylchuk**, Eastern Rural Director, whose contributions during his term were welcome. At the same time, I welcome our three new board members: Midwestern Urban Director **Eileen Clarke**, Mayor of the Town of Gladstone; Northern Director **Oswald Sawh**, Councillor for the City of Thompson; and Eastern Rural Director **George Harbottle**, Reeve of the RM of Alexander. Fresh ideas and new perspectives are indeed positive and we look forward to working with you.

Have a safe and enjoyable summer! \$

“To be asked to speak to a captive audience of ministers from every province and territory was nothing short of a great honour – and a great opportunity.”



Joe Masi, Executive Director

Proactive with PSAB efforts

PSAB – if you haven't heard this acronym yet, your CAO certainly has. PSAB stands for Public Sector Accounting Board, and beginning January 1, 2009, all governments in Canada, including local governments, must adopt PSAB generally accepted accounting practices (PSAB GAAP).

The AMM and the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs have undertaken a joint venture to help municipalities adopt PSAB GAAP.

“This is an initiative of great importance for municipalities, and the AMM is committed to providing support to our members over the next two years as we approach the implementation date.”

The Department has seconded a full time project manager, **Michel St. Amant**, who spoke at our recent June District Meetings. The AMM is in the process of hiring a second staff person to work with Michel and directly with municipalities over the next two years. This will ensure municipalities receive the support they need to transition to PSAB as easily as possible.

The AMM has also set up a training session on Tangible Capital Assets (TCA). PSAB requires that municipalities record their TCA (buildings, vehicles, roads, water systems and sewers) and amortize them over their useful life. This one-day session is being offered 22 times in eight different communities. On-line registration

is available on the AMM website, and with a maximum of 20 spaces per session, they are filling up quickly. Training sessions on the other major implementation issues will be offered later.

This is an initiative of great importance for municipalities, and the AMM is committed to providing support to our members over the next two years as we approach the implementation date.

A second item of interest during June District Meetings was the AMM History Book Project. This project has generated a great deal of interest and excitement for municipalities and AMM staff alike. We have had several preliminary meetings with our author, **Dr. Gordon Goldsborough**, and have also interviewed several former MAUM and UMM presidents. We have been gathering artifacts, photographs, records, minutes, and other documents from our members across the province and will continue to do so in the coming months. This constitutes a 'good start' in what we anticipate will take the next year and several months to complete.

Please continue to send your materials our way and let us know if there are any former MAUM or UMM executives in your community who we should interview for their recollections. From the inaugural meeting of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities (UMM) in 1905, to the formation of the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities (MAUM), to present day AMM, there are many, many memories and events that need to be included in this history book. Our connection to those memories is through YOU, our members. We appreciate all you have contributed, and most certainly will continue to contribute, towards a history that belongs to us all. \$

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STATISTICS CANADA CENSUS

Manitoba is ranked fifth in population growth in Canada. Since 2001, we have increased in population at a rate of 2.6%. Our current population stands at 1,148,401.

- The southeast portion of Manitoba makes up for 7.6% of the 2.6% increase.
- The Interlake has increased at a rate of 5.4%
- The South-Central region increased at a rate of 4.1%.
- Steinbach, with a growth rate of 19.9%, is the fastest growing city in the Province.
- Winnipeg has had a 2.2% increase.

WABANONG NAKAGUM OKIMAWIN RECEIVES \$2.5 MILLION

The Honourable Stan Struthers, Minister of Conservation, recently announced a five-year, \$2.5 million transfer agreement between the government of Manitoba and Wabanong Nakagum Okimawin (WNO) Council of Chiefs.

The \$2.5 million will be distributed in payments of \$500,000 over the next five years ending in 2011. First Nations people will apply to the WNO to receive funding for their individual land-use plans.

"The priority for First Nations and Aboriginal Peoples is the well-being of its people, protecting traditional ceremonies

and practices, and making sure the land is properly cared for," said **Nelson Keeper**, chair of WNO.

The top priority for the WNO is to provide protection to the environment and boreal forest on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. Sustainable land and resource development are also included in the long-term plan.

MANITOBA LEADS THE WAY IN GEOTHERMAL TECHNOLOGY

The Honourable Jim Rondeau, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines, recently announced that Manitoba is at three times the Canadian average in geothermal installations. Rondeau made the announcement while attending the first conference of the Manitoba Geothermal Energy Alliance (MGEA). Manitoba Hydro's Power Smart Loan program has been a factor in the acceleration of geothermal installations. Although the initial installation cost of geothermal units is higher, the operating costs for these units is about half of the cost for a high efficient furnace or electric baseboard heat.


"The success of geothermal has been due to a combination of Manitoba's highly skilled and entrepreneurial geothermal industry, promotion of the technology by Manitoba Hydro and attractive economics," said **Brent Laufer**, president of MGEA. "Geothermal simply saves money by reducing heat bills for Manitoba." MGEA membership has doubled in the past year.

EXTENDED COVERAGE FOR GROUND AMBULANCE SERVICE

The Honourable Theresa Oswald, Minister of Health, recently announced the Province would extend coverage of inter-facility medical transport into neighbouring provinces or states.


The Province will now provide extended coverage to the cost of ground ambulance service:

- If a Manitoba resident who regularly sees a physician across the border is admitted to a hospital in that community and subsequently requires an inter-facility transfer (IFT) back to a hospital in Manitoba;
- If a resident is in a Manitoba border hospital and requires services best accessed from a hospital across the border in a neighbouring province or state; or
- If a resident in an accident close to a border in Manitoba is transported to a hospital across the border but subsequently requires an IFT to a hospital in Manitoba to access specialized services or to recover.




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IFT transfers will apply to those situations that are deemed medically necessary as determined by a physician. Restrictions related to out-of-province travel still apply. Manitobans should have travel insurance for travel outside the province, whether for business or pleasure.

HOMETOWN MANITOBA PROGRAM POPULAR

The Honourable Rosann Wowchuk, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, announced provincial funding for the Hometown Manitoba program has reached record proportions. Funding for 267 rural and northern community improvement projects is at \$479,400. This in turn will generate an additional \$2.4 million in community investments.

The Hometown Manitoba program provides funding for two categories:

1. Meeting Places Projects – where the focus is on exterior public meeting places, main street enhancements, green space development and community signage;
2. Main Streets Projects – assist non-profit organizations, co-operatives, and businesses to complete enhancements and upgrades to their buildings and the surrounding green spaces.

The Hometown Manitoba program was introduced in 2004 with 176 projects approved sharing more than \$300,000. In 2005, 190 projects shared over \$350,000 and in 2006 there were 168 projects sharing just over \$312,000.

Hometown Manitoba program information and applications for funding is available through any GO office at toll-free 1-800-567-7334 or at the Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives website at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/ri/community/ria01s04.html>.

FARMERS' MARKETS ENCOURAGE MANITOBBANS TO BUY LOCAL

Manitobans and visitors to the province are encouraged to look for the famous farmers' markets and roadside stands that are once again appearing in neighbourhoods and communities province-wide, providing an excellent selection of Manitoba's fresh foods, Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives Minister Rosann Wowchuk said recently.

"Supporting farmers' markets is a great opportunity to meet people who produce some of the best food available and a chance to experience the flavours of homegrown goodness," said Wowchuk. "Consumers benefit from the quality of fresh, locally-pro-

duced foods while supporting the livelihoods of Manitoba producers."

In support of local farmers, the Province has produced two brochures identifying the locations and dates of farmers' markets, roadside stands and U-pick businesses: *Your Guide to Farmers' Markets in Manitoba 2007* and *Enjoy the Great Taste of Manitoba Vegetables 2007*. The brochures are available at all Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives GO offices and online at <http://www.manitoba.ca/agriculture/consumer>.

"A trip to the farmers' market means you get the pick of the crop," said Wowchuk.

"Celebrate summer with foods fresh from Manitoba fields." 🍅



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Increasing diversity in municipal politics



The Summer 2005 issue of the *Municipal Leader* kicked off a special four-part series titled “Increasing Diversity in Municipal Politics.” The installments, which wrapped up with “Lessons learned” in the Spring 2006 issue, focused on ways to get more women, youth, and visible minorities involved in local government. At the time, we asked readers to take a look around their council table and ask themselves if their council is truly representative of the communities it is mandated to represent.

While the answer to that question would probably be “no” in most communities, we are definitely inching closer, particularly in the area of women in politics. With the recent provincial election resulting in a record 18 women in the Manitoba Legislature – at 32%, the highest percentage in Canada – it is not surprising that municipal council tables are following suit. And, as the association representing the 198 incorporated municipalities in Manitoba, the AMM board table is also beginning to reflect this trend.

Recently, our June District Meetings resulted in a fourth woman elected to the AMM Board. **Eileen Clarke**, Mayor of Gladstone now holds the seat of Midwestern Urban Director. She joins Town of Virden councillor **Maxine Chacun** (Western Urban Director); RM of Rosser Reeve **Alice Bourgouin** (Interlake Rural Director); and Town of Rosburn Mayor **Shirley Kalynuik** (Urban Vice-President). These four women represent 24% of the AMM board of 17. While this figure does not come close to reflecting the reality that women make up 52% of the population, it *does* exceed the national average of 21% of elected officials represented by women. Furthermore, it is double the number of women who sat on the board just two short years ago.

While women make up one facet of a diverse council or board table, people belonging to visible minorities are also not well represented. While it is difficult to give accurate figures for how many of Manitoba’s municipal officials identify as belonging to a visible minority, it is safe to say that most council tables do not reflect the strong multicultural mosaic that exists in many communities. The City of Thompson is one municipality where this is not the case, and **Oswald Sawh**, Councillor for the City of Thompson, was recently elected to the seat of Northern Director on the AMM board.

Born in Guyana in South America, Councillor Sawh moved with his family to Canada

at the age of six. First elected to Thompson City Council in 2002, Oswald says that he has never felt his skin colour was a barrier to his move into politics, and he has always felt a lot of support in the community. While his seat on the AMM board makes up 6% of the board, falling slightly below the 7.9% of Manitobans who identify themselves as belonging to a visible minority, it still represents a step forward towards diversity amongst current AMM directors.

“We wanted to give our youth the opportunity to have a say.”
Ernie Epp,
CAO, Town of Morden

There also appears to be substantial room for optimism in the area of youth in politics. Youth are indeed interested in improving their communities and affecting change, and here in Manitoba, *The Municipal Act* authorizes municipalities to appoint a youth member to sit with the council and participate in its deliberations.

We were fortunate to make the acquaintance of one such youth at the Central June District Meeting in Morden on June 12. **Bryton Moen** is a youth councillor for the Town of Morden. At 17 years of age, Bryton is serving a one-year term on Morden’s council, generally acting like a regular council member, albeit without voting privileges. “I’ve always been interested in politics,” he explains, “and when the position was advertised at school, I jumped at it.” Bryton, who will attend Brandon University this fall, even says that “this has been an excellent learning experience for me and has somewhat inspired me to major in political science.”



Bryton Moen, Youth Councillor, Town of Morden

The benefits have worked both ways. According to Morden CAO **Ernie Epp**, “We wanted to give our youth the opportunity to have a say. For example, we were planning to include a trade show booth in our local career symposium, and Bryton gave us some real insight into what to include, what not to include, and how to present it to our youth. And he was bang-on.”

The major requirements of being a youth councillor are that the individual must live in the municipality; must be under 18; and must make a one-year commitment. Moen has had no problem with the final requirement. According to Epp, “our next council meeting is the day before Bryton’s graduation, but he’s fitting it in.”

Manitoba’s municipal council tables may have a ways to go before they are truly representative of the communities they are mandated to represent. However, even in the two years since our “Diversity in Municipal Politics” series ran, strides have been made, both around local council tables and at the AMM board level. By increasing participation in municipal politics, our communities are indeed becoming stronger. ☺



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UPCOMING EVENTS

August, 2007

- 1-3 AMM Midwestern Municipal Visits
- 1 Tangible Capital Assets Training – Winnipeg
- 14 Tangible Capital Assets Training – Dauphin
- 15 Tangible Capital Assets Training – Russell
- 16 Tangible Capital Assets Training – Portage la Prairie
- 21 Tangible Capital Assets Training – Brandon
- 22 Tangible Capital Assets Training – Brandon
- 28 Tangible Capital Assets Training – Winnipeg
- 29 Tangible Capital Assets Training – Winnipeg

September, 2007

- 10 Tangible Capital Assets Training – Dauphin
- 11 Tangible Capital Assets Training – Gimli

- 19 Tangible Capital Assets Training – Brandon
- 20 Tangible Capital Assets Training – Brandon
- 25 Tangible Capital Assets Training – Winnipeg
- 26 Tangible Capital Assets Training – Winnipeg

October, 2007

- 5 AMM Education Session #4 – Governance Success with Gord McIntosh – Portage la Prairie

November, 2007

- 26-29 AMM Annual Convention – Brandon



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Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats – each and every one of them can mean the difference between success and, if not failure, at least mediocrity. In times gone by, we put our trust in others, who would look at our organizations from the outside and provide opinions about where we needed to go to be successful. More recently, a revelation, the era of ‘Strategic Planning’ has come upon us. It really does make much more sense to bring together those who have a vested interest, in order to share their opinions about something that means a great deal to them.

On June 15 and 16, the MMAA did just that. We brought together our Board members to discuss our ‘SWOT,’ as it is referred to. In order to make best use of our time, the entire event included a Board meeting; Strategic Planning Session, and an opportunity for members to discuss the business of the organization in a more relaxed atmosphere. This also gave us the opportunity to say “thank-you” to the volunteer members of our Board by providing a golf game or spa experience along with dinner.

The results, while not surprising, were thought provoking and very valuable. A range of subjects was discussed including professional development, member involvement, promoting the profession, expansion of services, PSAB implementation and more. The subjects were discussed in detail until the group identified the issues that it felt were most important to members and to the health of the MMAA.

The plan was to deal with a few things, but do it well. From there, action plans were developed to address these issues. Our facilitator, **Jack Gillespie**, will prepare a report for the Board regarding the results of the process and this report would be made available to everyone on our website.

Later, as Board members gathered socially, there was an opportunity to revisit our discussions and for everyone to take ownership of the Plan. In my experience, at a time like this, there is always a little polish added to an already significant piece of work. I was pleased with the results and particularly optimistic about the direction that the Association is headed.

I have had the opportunity to become involved in many Strategic Planning ses-

sions throughout my career. In almost every case, they have resulted in the best use of resources to achieve the most desirable results. In municipal government, I believe

that this tool is unique in its value. I highly recommend the process to all and, quite frankly, I wonder how we got along without it in the past. \$





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3rd Annual Lobby Days successful

The AMM met with 30 members of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly during the AMM's third annual 'Lobby Days' held April 17 and 18, 2007.

The purpose of the two-day blitz of the Manitoba Legislature is to meet not only with Cabinet Ministers, but also with other MLAs to ensure they are aware of the priorities of Manitoba's municipalities. The AMM met with MLAs from all three parties represented in the Manitoba Legislature.

During this year's meetings, the AMM briefed MLAs on two top municipal priorities: fiscal balance and water issues. AMM President **Ron Bell** was pleased with this year's Lobby Days, saying, "with an election on the horizon, we needed to ensure these topics were high on everyone's radar and I think we achieved that."

The briefs presented to MLAs during Lobby Days are available on the AMM website at http://www.amm.mb.ca/pol_provincial.html. ❧





1 (L-R) Interlake Urban Director Randy Sigurdson; MLA for Tuxedo Heather Stefanson; Leader of the Manitoba PC Party Hugh McFadyen; former Northern Director Bert Lagimodiere; and Rural Vice-President Doug Dobrowolski

2 Urban Vice-President Shirley Kalyniuk; Parklands Rural Director Robert Misko; Interlake Rural Director Alice Bourgouin; and Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party Jon Gerrard



3 MLA for Minto, Andrew Swan; Winnipeg Director Russ Wyatt; Special Advisor to Minister Ashton Clif Evans; and President Ron Bell

4 MLA for Flin Flon, Gerard Jennissen, MLA for the Interlake Tom Nevakshonoff; and Interlake Urban Director Randy Sigurdson

5 Central Urban Director Mel Klassen discusses AMM issues with MLA for Minnedosa Leanne Rowat

6 Director of Policy & Communications Tyler MacAfee; Drew Caldwell, MLA for Brandon East, wearing a vintage AMM jacket; and Central Rural Director Ralph Groening

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Review of George Cuff Sessions

April 12 and 19, 2007



The AMM was pleased to bring world-renowned municipal speaker and consultant **George B. Cuff** to the 2007 AMM Education Program for two information and inspiration filled workshops in April.

George began his career in local government as a department head and later in a consulting position with the provincial government. George's foray into public service was as Mayor of Spruce Grove, Alberta where he served four terms. Like many municipal officials in Manitoba, George was involved in the association side of municipal government and serves as past president of the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. George's role as an elected official led him to enter the private sector as a consultant. This is where George comes to us, and to municipal organizations and local governments around the world.

George's presentation "Improving Your Serve: Becoming Purposeful in Governance" focused on a variety of governance issues including:

- governance roadblocks;
- the role of Council in management's activities;
- steps to take in setting Council's vision;
- making meetings matter;
- a host of key points on good governance; and
- a trait that George cannot stress enough, ethical behaviour.

George Cuff powerfully and responsibly makes his point by making you see your role in municipal government as one that requires not only passion, but the highest standards as well.

The attendees at both sessions (169 in total) had the opportunity to speak with George during the breaks and get particular advice or simply exchange experiences. During each workshop, George generously provided candid examples of conduct, actions and challenges that attendees could agree with or use as reference. His experience and recommendations consistently referred back to having an honest and strong work ethic.

George's parting words at the Brandon workshop reminded everyone to think of their responsibilities in local government



George Cuff talks governance with AMM members.

as the windshield in the car. It faces forward with its width encompassing a vast horizon, while the rear-view mirror is how we should look back on the past, always there, but only as a small portion of the view (and growing

smaller as we drive toward the future).

The AMM would like to thank George and all the participants of the April education workshops for their commitment to continuing education. ☺

The Hallmarks of Effective Governance

- Clear understanding of mandate
- A governance model that works
- Clarity of Roles
- Respect between members of council
- Service based on Servant-leader mindset
- Interface between council and administration based on Trust/respect
- Effective Protocols
- Community above that of interest groups
- Policy makers set the vision; strategic agenda the focus
- A culture of continuous learning
- Respect for the views of each other
- Ability to challenge ideas not people
- Culture of municipality protected
- Commitment to communicate council policy not personal viewpoints
- Members prepared to prepare
- Personal and corporate accountability
- Willingness to ask the dumb question
- Personal integrity (adherence to a code of conduct).

From "A Governance Seminar" by George B. Cuff, CMC (2007)

Member comments:

I was at the George Cuff presentation today and wanted to pass on my congratulations and thanks to AMM for probably the best seminar I have been to in years. This man reminded me of why I got into municipal governance to begin with. He was direct, to the point and pulled no punches. How refreshing to listen to someone speak in a frank and understandable manner, who uses words that do not have a double meaning, who is passionate about municipal affairs and who has stood up for what he believes in. Please feel free to use this any way you want to get as many elected officials and CAOs out to the next seminar in Brandon. In a time where we are looking for answers this man reminds us that we have them if we can stay the true course. Plus \$20 for this amazing seminar, lunch and snacks has got to be the best deal any municipality has come across in a very long time.

Please pass on my thanks to anyone that had anything to do with this endeavour.

Councillor Dave Quinn, City of Portage la Prairie

Coming up:

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Gordon A. McIntosh
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This session will provide you with tools, strategies and ideas focusing on the following topics:

- How individual behaviour styles contribute to or derail relationships;
- Why group dynamics can be positive or negative team factor;
- What are the critical indicators of governance success;
- What are some proactive strategies that maximize effectiveness;
- When to use different reactive strategies for derailers to success; and
- How to regularly facilitate organizational assessments.

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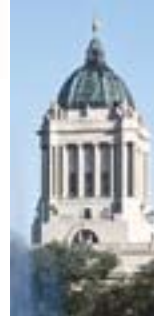
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Election and spring session in the books

By Tyler MacAfee, AMM Director of Policy and Communications

A budget, an election, a Throne Speech and a spring session of the Legislature – not bad for three months. April, May and June saw a great deal of action at the provincial level. Here is a recap.

April

On April 4, the Province unveiled *Budget 2007: The Building Budget*, which had a number of commitments of interest to municipalities, including:

Education Tax – The Province promises a new 5-year plan to move to increase provincial funding to 80% of total public schools education expenditures. The Budget also increases the education property tax credit from \$400 to \$525 and the farmland rebate to 65% for 2007 and up to 80% over the next four years.

Safe Communities – Budget 2007 commits to 30 new police officers, including 14 in Winnipeg and 2 in Brandon. The budget also doubles its support for Manitoba's Integrated Organized Crime Task Force to tackle gang activity and drug trafficking, and commits new funds to the Province's crystal meth strategy.

Building Manitoba Fund – According to the news release, Budget 2007 provides municipalities a 5% funding increase and a 17% increase in rural community development grants for local priorities such as public safety and infrastructure through the Building Manitoba Fund.

Housing – Budget 2007 commits to a \$104-million, multi-year plan for safe, secure and affordable housing for Aboriginal people, seniors, the inner city and northern Manitoba.

Additional highlights include:

- More spaces for international medical graduates;
- \$12.6 million for transit systems in Winnipeg, Brandon, Flin Flon and Thompson;
- Wind energy and bio-diesel commitments;
- The addition of five communities (Dauphin, The Pas, Flin Flon, Portage la Prairie, and Selkirk) to the Neighbourhoods Alive! Program; and
- Improved access to healthy foods for Northern Manitobans.

While the Budget was positive, there were certainly some areas where the AMM was hoping for more. The AMM would have liked to see a clear, adequate financial commitment to implement the requirements of the Water Protection Act. The Budget *did* commit \$10 million to water initiatives, but more is needed. As well, the \$33 million committed for infrastructure projects is lacking in light of the total needs of communities. Budget 2007 failed to deliver the long-term plan needed to address the province's growing infrastructure deficit.

May

While April showers bring May flowers, this year in Manitoba an April budget brought a May election with Manitobans going to the polls on May 22. The NDP was returned to power, this time with an additional seat. While a few of the players changed, the balance of power remained the same.

Elections are a great time to see where everyone stands on key issues and the AMM spent a great deal of time during the campaign tracking the promises that were made by all three of the parties represented in the Legislature. While the AMM will certainly be holding the NDP to its promises, campaigns always generate good ideas and the AMM will be closely reviewing all of the municipal promises made in the campaign. Some of the good ideas generated in the campaign included:

- 700 new nurses, 100 new doctors and \$1 million for filling rural and northern vacancies;
- A new Watersmart program, along with \$1 million for a biodiesel fund;
- Increases for police budgets, more firefighters; and
- Increased recreation centre funding, highway funding, and funding for libraries.

June

Hot on the heels of the Provincial Election, MLAs were back at work with the House returning on June 6. The mini-Throne Speech delivered to open the session borrowed from many of the commitments already made in the recent election and budget. Highlights included:

- *Moving forward in health care* – with further increases in the training and recruitment of health professionals, and added measures to shorten wait times, along with the expansion of community health options and prevention programs.
- *Moving forward with a cleaner, healthier environment* – with initiatives to further strengthen the protection of our waterways, forests and air quality.
- *Moving forward by making our communities safer* – with the hiring of more police, prosecutors and firefighters; by adding community *Lighthouses* and other options for youth recreation; and by working with the Federal government to introduce tougher consequences for those who break the law.
- *Moving forward by preserving affordability* – with homeowners benefiting from increased property tax credits and a multi-year plan to fund 80% of school costs from provincial revenues.
- *Moving forward with the building agenda* – with the \$4 billion investment in Manitoba road infrastructure.

The Throne Speech also made a commitment to the acceleration of the Treaty Land Entitlement process.

The session ended June 14 with the Throne Speech being passed along with three bills. A commitment was made to reintroduce all 22 bills introduced prior to the election when the house returns on September 25.

All and all, it was a busy spring on the Provincial scene and the AMM looks forward to the start of the September session where things will really get underway. ☞



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What's in a wind farm?

An update on wind energy in Manitoba

By Kimberly Ballance, Senior Policy Analyst

Wind energy and wind farms are becoming well-used terms in Manitoba, especially with Manitoba Hydro's call for up to 300 megawatts (MW) of commercial-scale wind-powered generation. This initiative is spurring municipalities, landowners and private companies to consider building wind farms. Each proposal is required to have a minimum capacity of 20 MW, but where do you start when planning a wind farm? What needs to be considered?

Wind monitoring and data collection has confirmed that Manitoba has an excellent opportunity to expand energy generated through wind resources, as there are many sites that are located in close vicinity to existing transmission lines so the energy can be moved effectively. Wind energy and hydroelectricity are complementary power sources, with hydro complimenting wind in the short-term and wind complimenting hydro in the long term. In addition, wind energy production peaks in the winter when demand for energy is at its highest.

There are a number of challenges and benefits to wind energy development. Municipalities interested in pursuing this option are well advised to fully research this opportunity before signing agreements with wind developers. Challenges for Manitoba include the need for coordinated provincial policy, planning and transmission concerns, ownership models, aerial spraying concerns, and issues of sound and visual impact. A majority of these challenges can be resolved with quality planning, design and coordination with stakeholders.

There are numerous benefits to wind energy generation as well that should be considered throughout the process of pursuing a wind project. Benefits include:

- Increased local economic development, job creation and skill development in the areas of project management, manufacturing, construction, operation and maintenance;
- Increased tax base for municipalities;
- Low maintenance revenue streams for landowners;
- Environmental benefits (wind energy is emission-free); and
- Increased tourism.

Municipalities interested in developing a wind energy generation project should fully research the option prior to signing agreements with wind developers. As the wind energy generation sector grows in Manitoba, information gained through individual projects will assist

in the development of other projects. However, knowledge of the industry including planning and design should be fully researched.

Some information sources are:

- Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA) - <http://www.canwea.ca/>
- Manitoba Hydro - http://www.hydro.mb.ca/projects/wind_powered.shtml
- Wikipedia - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wind_power
- American Wind Energy Association - <http://www.awea.org/>
- Global Wind Energy Council - <http://www.gwec.net/>
- Energy Council of Canada - <http://www.energy.ca/users/folder.asp>
- ecoENERGY, Government of Canada - <http://www.ecoaction.gc.ca/ecoenergie-ecoenergie/power-electricite/index-eng.cfm>

Fast Facts:

- A rating of 99 MW (as is the case for the St. Leon's wind farm) means that a wind farm has the ability to create 99 MW at any given instant, however that does not mean that it generates a constant 99 MW throughout the year. To determine how much electricity a wind farm generates in a year, we use the term capacity factor, which represents the average output over the year as a percentage of rated capacity. A well-sited wind generator will have a capacity factor of about 30-40% - the St. Leon's wind farm is in the upper part of this range. So, we can calculate that St. Leon's annual electricity generation is equal to 99 MW x (the number of hours in a year) x (the capacity factor). This means that the St. Leon wind farm generates approximately 350,000 MW of energy per year. That is enough energy to power all the homes in Portage la Prairie and Morden combined!¹
- According to Environment Canada, burning fossil fuels to generate electricity creates 18% of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions.
- The American Wind Energy Association indicates that technological improvements such as lightweight materials have enabled the development of bigger, more efficient wind turbines. These changes have contributed to the 80% decrease in wind energy costs over the last 2 decades.
- A wind turbine was featured on the 51¢ postage stamp from Canada Post.
- A study reviewing the impact of wind farms on birds in the US, found that generally, only 2 birds per turbine per year ever die in collisions with wind turbines which is far less than the millions of deaths per year associated with birds crashing into buildings and windows.²

¹ Manitoba Hydro and CanWEA.

² Avian Collisions with Wind Turbines: A Summary of Existing Studies and Comparisons to Other Sources of Avian Collision Mortality in the United States, August 2001

Did you know?

Wind is the world's fastest growing energy source with sustained worldwide growth rates in excess of 25% annually.

By the end of 2006, worldwide wind-generated capacity was over 70,000 MW.

Canada has about 1500 MW of installed capacity and is growing by about 50% a year. This accounts for approximately 1% of Canada's electricity supply, or enough to power 450,000 homes.

According to the Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA), Canada has at least 50,000 MW of developable wind resources, which is enough to supply about 20% of Canada's electricity supply.

“Municipalities interested in pursuing this option are well advised to fully research this opportunity before signing agreements with wind developers.”

Aerial application near wind farms

Transport Canada does not impose airspace restrictions in the vicinity of wind farms. While the *Canadian Aviation Regulations (CARs)* set out altitudes and distances for the safe operation of an aircraft, a person may operate an aircraft, for the purpose of aerial application, at altitudes and distances less than those set out in the *CARs*. For more detailed information, please read the Permissible Low Altitude Flight section of the *CARs*, [section 602.15 (2)], which may be found online at http://www.tc.gc.ca/CivilAviation/Regserv/Affairs/cars/PART6/602.htm#602_14_2_b. If you have questions about how the *CARs* apply to aerial application, please call Transport Canada toll-free at 1-888-463-0521.



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The rise of the Domain Hall

How the people of a small Manitoba town came together to revitalize their community

By Lynne Bereza, AMM Communications Coordinator

Looking back at the Mayors, Reeves and CAOs meetings of last March one would be hard pressed to find a location quite as unexpected as the Domain Hall, where the Central District meeting took place. The tiny community of Domain consists of only about 21 homes and 150 people. So how did they come to have a large, new, formal hall?

While giving opening remarks at the Mayors, Reeves and CAOs meeting, it was evident that AMM Rural Vice-President and RM of Macdonald councillor **Doug Dobrowolski** is extremely proud of the hall. Given this pride – and the fact that he sat on the building committee responsible for raising funds for the new hall – he seemed an obvious choice to answer that question.

As is often the case in so many small communities, the local hall is a well-used and beloved building where many important events had taken place over the years – the types of events that contribute to and shape a community's history. But, the old hall was 63 years old and suffering the effects of time and use. A committee of community members was formed to debate whether to try to repair the old hall or to build a new one, a concept the committee was open to but which met with some resistance from the community at large. As Dobrowolski notes, "there were some naysayers. It took a few meetings to get everyone convinced a new hall was the

way to go." What

propelled Dobrowolski to be one of those pushing for an expensive new hall? "I always feel every community needs a gathering place. Once people started to see concrete being poured and walls going up, they took ownership of it."

The new hall was not an inexpensive undertaking, but the community of Domain came up with some novel ways to pay for it. They also obtained a Community Places Grant and a grant from Industry Canada. Local businesses such as Enns Brothers and the Local Federated Co-op did their part, as did some from out of town. For instance, Rosenort Credit Union donated all the chairs, recognizing that people from Domain do business in Rosenort.

Perhaps the most 'visible' corporate fundraising effort is reflected in the hall's light fixtures. Each one (and there are over 30 lights) has a sponsor's name prominently displayed on it. Indeed, it is one of the first things one notices upon entering the hall. These sponsorships did not go cheap – at a sponsor level of \$8,000 per light, the committee was able to raise a significant amount of money.

Locals pledged a great deal of personal funds to the hall, as well. Landowners paid \$1/acre for three years, while residents were asked to pledge a minimum of \$500. Local farmers also raised money by farming a ¼ section of land for three years – at one time 17 combines worked together to harvest the crop! "Overall, local residents raised

just under \$400,000 – and the hall has about \$85,000 in the bank today," beams Dobrowolski. And more work is planned. "We are looking at installing a geo-thermal system next."

While the fundraising effort was indeed a triumph, the most telling proof of success came after the doors opened. "The community support has been tremendous," says Dobrowolski. "We have so many events, like a darts night, our annual Gala Dinner, a *Meet Your Neighbour* night, and plenty of other special events, not to mention weddings and socials." Naturally, local people have first chance to purchase tickets for any event – after all, they paid for the hall!

While residents are thrilled with their new hall, a real point of pride within the structure is devoted to all that is old – the hall's "heritage room", which highlights the history of the town. "We wanted local community clubs to have a space within the hall to call home," explains Dobrowolski. "The heritage room has pictures of our history, as well as the original lights from the old hall. We've even incorporated the doors from the old hall – they're on the storage closet."

Asked to summarize the success of such a huge project, Dobrowolski points firmly to the people of Domain. "You need willingness from within. If people believe in something, they will find a way to get it done," he says with conviction. This willingness may also come from locals who are all too familiar with what the loss of a community icon can do to a town. "A few years earlier we lost our local store and that was a real blow to our community," explains Dobrowolski. "When your gathering place is gone, no one comes to town.

This hall has helped to revitalize our town." ❧



Light fixtures proved to be a large component of the hall's fundraising effort.



Ending the paper chase

Brandon City Council goes paperless

Submitted by the City of Brandon

The City of Brandon has long been a pioneer in Manitoba's recycling movement. Home to a state-of-the-art material recycling facility, Brandon residents enjoy curbside collection of household waste, recyclables, and yard waste. Brandon City Council is not only a firm believer in recycling, but in reducing waste as much as possible. This year they decided to tackle one area where a great deal of paper was being used – council meetings. Not satisfied to simply reduce the amount of paper that was being used each meeting, the council took the bold step to go where few councils have gone before – completely paperless.

Out with the old, in with the new

The City of Brandon's paperless concept actually started a number of years ago with internal and external communication being carried out as much as possible through the use of e-mails. This, of course, has drastically reduced Brandon's annual paper, postage and staff costs, and led the council to ask themselves some questions: Why produce all that paper when we don't really have to? Why not use the technology when it is right there at our fingertips?

Council decided it was time to leave the old cumbersome paper generating methods behind when it came to preparing for Coun-

cil meetings. No more multi page agenda packages being painstakingly put together and delivered throughout the City to each member of Council, with copies made for City Administration and the media for the Council meetings. Council specifically wanted access to the detailed information to be electronic and to use no more paper. As well, Council determined that it was important for the public to have the same ease of access so that Council could be seen as transparent and accountable. It was felt that the public needed to know not only what Council decided, but also the background for such decisions. Now, at the Council meetings, the agenda and all supporting documentation are viewed and notes are created electronically through the use of laptop computers.

"This fits in well with our desire to set a proper environmental example to our residents..."

*Mayor Dave Burgess,
City of Brandon*

Because not all Council members had personal computers at home, it was agreed to purchase a laptop for each of the 11 members at a cost of \$1,000 each, a considerable savings due to the bulk purchase. (This investment will be easily recouped in just one year of practice). Council members could then use their laptops when at home or away and, most importantly, bring the laptops to the Council meeting to access the meeting agenda. This allows them to make notes before, during and following the meeting. In addition, the laptop allows the continuous electronic flow of information from City Administration to City Council on a daily basis. Previously, any information had to be copied and packages were delivered to members only once a week.

The agenda and all supporting documentation is not only available to the Council members electronically. The public and the media have full electronic access from the City's website as well.

Brandon Mayor **Dave Burgess** says the move to a paperless agenda has been easier than expected and allows for more efficient and effective information flow to all of Council with their laptop computers. He notes, "this also fits in well with our desire to set a proper environmental example to our residents wherever possible".



What are the savings?

With the introduction of the paperless agenda, the annual savings in paper and delivery costs to the City of Brandon will amount to \$2,029.96.

The staff hours reduced will result in an estimated savings of \$9,312.00.

This adds up to a total annual saving in operating costs in the first year of over \$11,000.

The savings to the environment? Priceless.

Why stop there?

While the City of Brandon could have patted itself on the back for its environmental initiative at the council table, the paperless mindset did not end there. City Administration was paralleling City Council's departure from the paper war. Why print and distribute reports manually when they're prepared electronically? These reports are now signed electronically, emailed to various addressees and even submitted for approval electronically. Not only is the demand for paper diminished considerably, but valuable staff time in physically preparing and transmitting these reports is being saved. As well, the entire operational process is much more quick and efficient.

But why stop even there? The paperless concept was expanded further to assist City Administration in its supportive function to City Council. A seamless electronic flow of communication from the public and City Administration to City Council and then back has been developed through a collaborative effort involving the City's Infor-

mation Technology and the City Clerk's Departments. Once a report has been created and approved for submission to City Council or a submission is received from the public and scanned, it is electronically integrated into the Council meeting agenda document for consideration and debate by Council. Electronically produced and colour-coded maps, drawings and charts are now accessible for viewing by all. Once dealt with by Council, the matter electronically flows into the minutes of the meeting and the advisory process that disseminates Council's decision - most of which is also being done electronically.

What is the key to the City of Brandon's success in implementing a paperless agenda concept? "Keep it simple," advises **Conrad Arvisais**, City Clerk. By doing just that, the City of Brandon has been able to bring about increased efficiencies and ease of access for Council, City Administration and the public they serve. Best of all, their approach is environmentally friendly - and saves money. ☺



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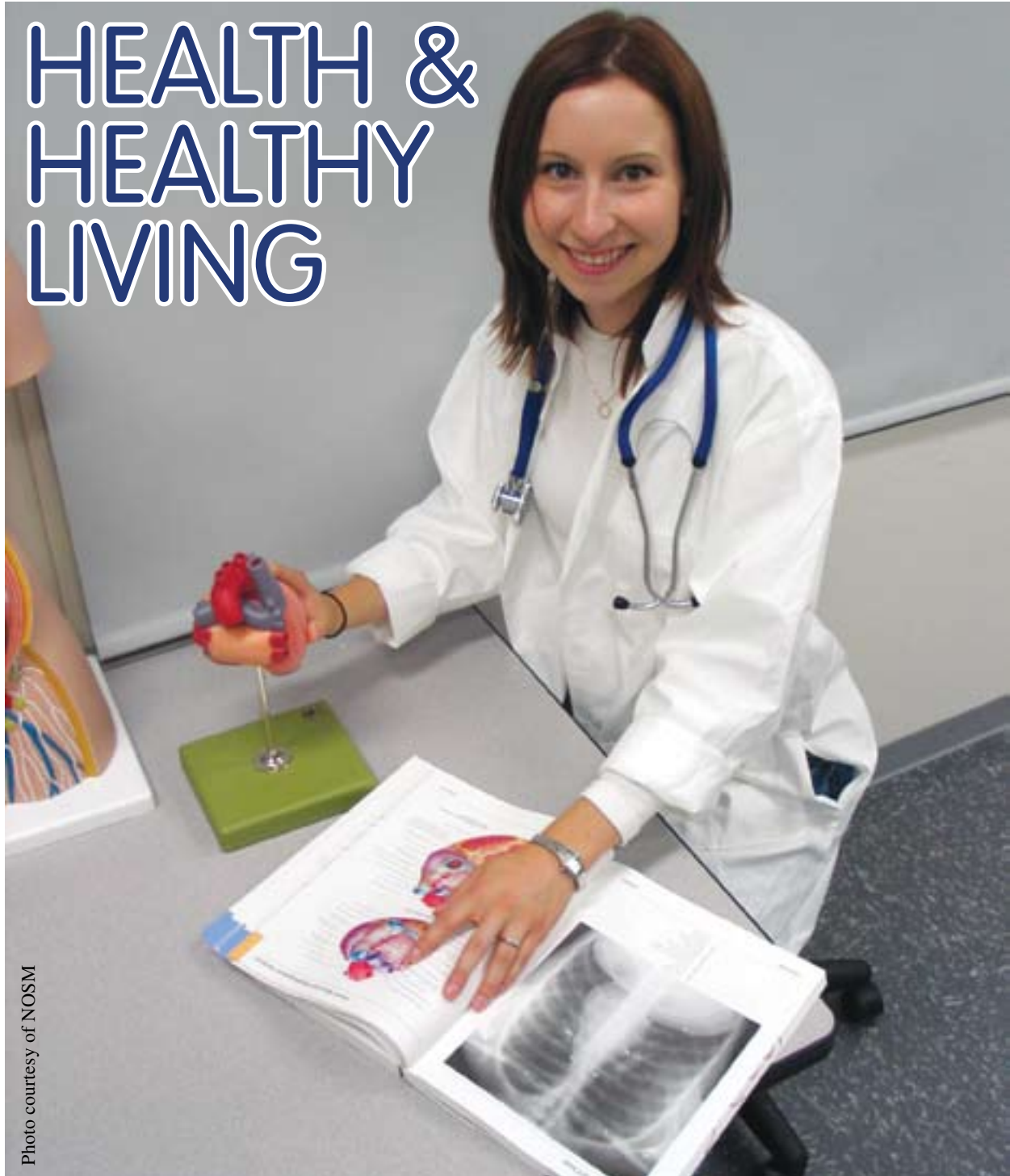


Photo courtesy of NOSM

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RHAs promote health care services across Manitoba

Submitted by Manitoba Health

Providing Manitobans with access to sustainable, quality health care, no matter where they live in the province, continues to be one of the Manitoba government's guiding principles.

The recent Throne Speech reaffirmed the government's commitment to making further progress in health care, building on existing programs and services to respond most effectively to the expressed needs of the communities they serve.

To achieve that worthy goal, the Manitoba government plans further increases in the training and recruitment of health professionals and added measures to shorten wait times. Community health options and prevention programs will be expanded. Investments in health facilities will continue to be made in every part of the province, with a special focus on emergency rooms, dialysis treatment and elder care.

Regional health authorities (RHAs) are working hard to provide health care services in tune with the specific needs of their communities. Their many successes to date are helping to build a stronger, more responsive health care system across the province.

Many of the success stories were inspired

by monitoring the needs of the service area and responding in creative and practical ways.

Listening to Manitobans

The *Winnipeg Regional Health Authority* continues to receive valuable public feedback from board-appointed Community Health Advisory Groups that provide ongoing opportunities for the community members to have input into the planning of health services in their communities. Over the past five years, more than 200 community members have volunteered their time and committed to sharing their unique perspectives and suggestions to address important health issues.

The *Assiniboine Regional Health Authority* holds twice-annual stakeholder meetings with community leaders to promote information sharing and open discussion. These meetings have been instrumental in establishing proactive relationships with community leaders.

Promoting healthy living

A milliliter of prevention is worth a kilogram of cure, so chronic disease prevention initiatives (CDPI) are thriving across Mani-

toba. Sandy Bay First Nation, part of *RHA Central*, belongs to a group with the highest premature mortality rate in Manitoba. Diabetes is epidemic, with diagnosis being seen at increasingly younger patients. The CDP program in Sandy Bay continues to build an environment that supports healthy choices. It is also moving toward organizational practices that will ensure sustainability of these changes. For example, the local walking club, with an average of 10 participants and 24 active members, meets about two days per week to develop better fitness through regular walks. The school walking challenge, introduced in May 2006, prompted 80 students to complete the Walk Across Canada Challenge, a health promotion project that requires participants to combine their walking distances, over a specified time period, to equal the distance across Canada.

Promoting healthy living among youth was also the catalyst behind the *Burntwood Regional Health Public Health Team's* Annual Health Circus in Thompson. The goal of the fun-filled, family-friendly event is to give families of children entering kindergarten an opportunity to have their children's vaccinations updated, undergo a development assessment, along with vision, hearing and dental screening. By conducting the screening in May, children who require intervention can be referred and treated before school begins.

Manitoba *in motion* programs around the province further encourage Manitobans of all ages to make physical activity a regular part of their lives to promote better health and well being.

Offering quality care closer to home

Improving access to health services remains a priority and progress toward that goal continues to be made around the province. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) in The Pas were bolstered with a new EMS facility that houses three ambulance, a training room and office space, a service centre benefiting all residents in the *NOR-MAN Regional Health Authority*. A similar facility was also opened by the *Interlake Regional Health Authority* to better serve residents of East St. Paul, West St. Paul, St. Andrews and St. Clements.



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The Burntwood RHA collaborated with Manitoba Health on a \$3.2 million dialysis redevelopment project at Thompson General Hospital. The new facility means less travel for local residents who need care, allowing them to receive this life-saving treatment close to home. In Dauphin, a \$7.4 million community health services building, providing one-stop services for residents in the *Parkland RHA*, now houses public health, community mental health and home care services under one roof.

Plans to make Brandon a regional centre for cancer care excellence moved forward

earlier this year when details of a new facility to house a new linear accelerator and supporting cancer treatment services were announced. This innovation was made possible by a collaboration between the *Brandon RHA* and CancerCare Manitoba. Community cancer care projects have also been established in Deloraine and Pinawa.

As part of the provincial government's long-term care strategy, the residents of Thompson recently officially opened their first personal care home. The \$9-million, 35-bed facility allows more area residents to stay in the community, close to their fami-

lies, in an energy-efficient, state-of-the-art care environment.

Technology is key, but people still make it happen in delivering quality health care. The provincial government continues to meet the demand for qualified health care professionals by expanding to 100 the University of Manitoba's faculty of medicine class, adding 25 spaces for the licensing program for international medical graduates, adding 50 new technologists training seats and supporting 3,000 nurses in training.

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Manitoba 

Healthy living in Manitoba

Compiled by AMM Staff

It has been said, “Healthy people make healthy families and healthy families make healthy communities.” There are many factors affecting the health of Manitobans. These include family history, gender, culture, education, employment, income, the environment, our coping skills and social support networks. As individuals and groups, there are many things that we can do to positively influence our physical, mental, social and spiritual health and wellbeing.

According to Manitoba’s Healthy Living Minister, **Kerri-Irvin Ross**, “All Manitobans have a role to play in building healthy communities. This includes a daily commitment to a healthier, more active lifestyle. It is a collective commitment – one we must pursue together for the well-being of all Manitobans.”

While a wide range of healthy living initiatives are available, what follows is just a partial list of those that may be of particular interest to municipal officials.

Manitoba in motion

In motion is a provincial strategy to help all Manitobans make physical activity part of their daily lives for health and enjoyment. The province’s vision is to make Manitobans healthier by increasing physical activity in the province by 10% by the year 2010.

Communities can get involved by registering to become a *Community in motion*. *Communities in motion* encourage all parts of the community such as local governments, health services, recreation services, schools, workplaces and neighborhoods to do their parts to increase physical activity opportunities for everyone. If you are interested in becoming a *Community in motion*, resources and tools, call 204-945 3648 in Winnipeg; or toll free at 1-866-788-3648.

Manitoba *in motion* Physical Activity Grants are available to help community partners plan and implement ways to increase regular physical activity among citizens of all ages. The next deadline for applications is October 15, 2007 for projects starting after January 1, 2008. For more information or to download a grant application, visit <http://www.manitobainmotion.ca/communities/>.

Mandatory PE in high school

Health Minister **Peter Bjornson** announced in April that physical education/health education (PE/HE) will become part of the Manitoba curriculum for the fall of 2008. The grades 11 and 12 PE/HE curricula will focus on developing active, healthy lifestyles through in-class and out-of-class activities. Students will be encouraged to take greater ownership of their own physical fitness and find activities suited to their interests and abilities.

Moving around Manitoba

Moving Around Manitoba, a new program encouraging Manitobans to get in motion, make healthy eating choices, manage their stress and support emotional wellbeing was launched in April 2007. A special website was set up to allow users to make a virtual trip around Manitoba as they track their physical activity levels. Registrants receive registration kits including information to help track personal physical activity, healthy eating and other items. The first 1,000 people to register also received a free pedometer.

As of June 13, 2007, more than 2,100 Manitobans had registered for Moving

Around Manitoba according to Healthy Living Minister Kerri Irvin-Ross.

“Since the launch of Moving Around Manitoba in early April, more than 2,125 participants have signed up and covered over 50,000 kilometres, taking us around Manitoba more than 12 times. To put it in a different context, it is like traveling from Winnipeg to Sydney, Australia, and back twice,” said Irvin-Ross.

Manitobans can register for the program online at <http://www.movingaroundmanitoba.ca> or by calling 945-3648 in Winnipeg or 1-866-788-3648 (toll-free).

Services for seniors

Seniors are recognized as one of the fastest-growing age groups in Canada. Manitoba currently has one of the highest per capita populations of seniors in the country with more than 157,000 residents being age 65 or older (14%). In 2001, 22% of Manitobans were aged 55 and older and this is expected to increase to 33% by 2021.

The Seniors and Healthy Aging Secretariat acts as a central point of contact for seniors, their family members and organizations. Staff members also



work to ensure government policies, programs and legislation reflect the needs of seniors.

Information on seniors housing, elder abuse, driving, legal tips, resources for caregivers, and more is available at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/shas/>.

Chronic disease prevention

According to the Manitoba Healthy Living website, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and cancer cost the Canadian economy more than an estimated \$55 billion every year. This represents the major and growing component of health care costs.

The most common chronic diseases include:

- cardiovascular disease;
- diabetes;
- cancer;
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD);
- asthma; and
- mental illness (including depression, stress and anxiety).

For information on activities that could help prevent or delay the onset of chronic disease, visit <http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/chronic.html>.

Healthy eating

Eating healthy foods in the right amounts can improve our overall health and help us avoid unhealthy weights. This can lower our risk for conditions like diabetes and heart disease.

Manitoba Health offers a comprehensive list of nutrition and healthy eating information at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/nutrition/index.html>. Topics covered include Nutrition Services & Programs, Healthy Eating, Food Security, and Food Supply.

In addition, Manitoba Healthy Living has established the Healthy Food in Schools website at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyschools/foodinschools/index.html>.

Injury prevention

Tragically, between 1992 and 2001, 5,702 Manitobans died as a result of injuries. As well, there were 120,611 hospitalizations for injuries in the province. However, deaths and hospitalizations due to injuries are preventable.

Manitoba Healthy Living has produced a report titled *Injuries in Manitoba: A 10-Year Review*, examining injuries in Manitoba during this time period. The report is designed to show the details of the burden of injury in our province to assist policy

makers and service providers with planning for injury prevention.

The report can be downloaded at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/injuryreview.html>. Information on water safety and farm safety are also available.

Canadian Safe Communities Foundation

Could Canada become the safest country in the world for people to live, learn,

The AMM profiled the Canadian Safe Communities Foundation and it's only Manitoba member, Brandon, in the Winter 2005 issue of the *Municipal Leader*.

work, and play? The Canadian Safe Communities Foundation (SCF) thinks so. This not-for-profit group is dedicated to making Canada a safe place to live, one community at a time. There are currently 46 Safe Communities covering an estimated 21% of Canadians. Brandon and the surrounding area is the first and, so far, the only designated Safe Community in Manitoba.

To learn how your community can become designated a "Safe Community" visit <http://www.safecommunities.ca/>.

Tobacco reduction

This year, tobacco will kill about 2,000 Manitobans.

In 1999 federal, provincial and territorial governments developed a national strategy to reduce tobacco use and agreed upon four goals including:

- Preventing youth from starting to smoke;
- Protecting non-smokers from exposure to second-hand smoke;
- Helping smokers quit; and
- Denormalizing tobacco use through influencing social norms.

Manitoba has taken a coordinated, comprehensive approach to reduce smoking-related disease, disability and death in Manitoba. On March 2, 2004, the Minister of Healthy Living introduced Bill 21 in the Legislature. This bill, prohibiting smoking in enclosed public and indoor workplaces where the government has clear jurisdiction, took effect on October 1, 2004.



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Healthy Living Manitoba has also developed the **Manitoba Provincial Tobacco Control Strategy: A Co-coordinated, Comprehensive Approach to Reduce Smoking-Related Disease, Disability and Death in Manitoba**. This document can be viewed at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/docs/tobacco2463.pdf>.

Protect your noggin

One of the recommendations from the Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures Task Force report of 2004 was to educate the public on the importance of wearing bike helmets. In 2006, the province introduced a low-cost bike helmet initiative that resulted in the purchase of more than 18,000 helmets and in March 2007, announced the program would be extended for another year. "Protect your Noggin" program information is available online at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/healthyliving/bikehelmet.html>

It is estimated that a properly fitted certified bike helmet can reduce the risk of serious head injury by up to 85 per cent. The American Academy of Pediatrics states that, "Having children wear helmets is the single most effective thing parents and caregivers can do to make bicycle riding safer."



West Nile virus

West Nile virus (WNV) is transmitted by mosquitoes. Most people who are bitten by an infected mosquito do not become ill and for those who do, the symptoms are usually mild. In some cases, the virus causes serious illness and sometimes death. Human cases of WNV were first detected in (southern) Manitoba in the summer of 2003, when 143 cases were identified. Of these 143 cases, 35 people had severe illness, including two deaths. In 2004, three human cases of WNV were identified, one with severe illness. In 2005, 58 human WNV cases were identified of which 10 cases were of the severe form of WNV, including one death. In 2006, 51 human cases were identified, including 17 severe cases.

Most mosquitoes do not carry WNV. In Manitoba, the main carrier of the virus is the *Culex tarsalis* mosquito. The risk of WNV varies from year to year and is influenced by temperature, precipitation, amount of virus in birds, etc. Manitobans are at highest risk of being bitten by a WNV infected mosquito during the months of July, August and early September, although some late June exposures have occurred.

The province's 2007 West Nile virus strategy includes surveillance, risk assessment, public education and mosquito control. Some refinements to the 2007 program have been made based on experience from previous years, feedback received, emerging information and national guidelines. The success of a program aimed at protecting citizens from new and emerging disease requires strong partnerships between the municipal, provincial and federal governments, as well as the public. Municipalities play key roles in supporting the planning and implementation of these activities.

For the latest information on West Nile virus, visit <http://www.gov.mb.ca/health/wnv/index.html>.

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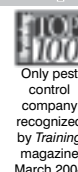


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Improving care in rural and northern Manitoba

New assessment process has international medical grads practicing in the province

Submitted by the Manitoba Department of Health

Regional health authorities across Manitoba, the Physician Resource Coordination Office (PRCO) at Manitoba Health, the University of Manitoba Faculty of Medicine, and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba have collaborated on changes to the process for assessing International Medical Graduates (IMGs) seeking medical licensure in primary care. The new process was implemented in the fall of 2006 to assess the suitability of IMGs for rural and northern practice in primary care.

This new process replaces the former CAPE (Clinicians Assessment & Professional Enhancement), a three-day assessment process for IMGs seeking direct licensure. The new assessment is based on the input for suggested improvements from many health stakeholders, including rural community physicians. Some of the feedback from IMGs themselves was that the former abbreviated assessment process was inadequate for assessment.

The changes are also based on best practices, in particular those of the Western Alliance for Assessment of International Physicians (WAIP).

The new assessment process now in place consists of a pre-employment interview to assess the suitability of the candidate for rural and northern settings, an orientation to health care in Manitoba and a three-day formal assessment process with a written component as well as simulated patient encounters. This is followed by a 12-week clinical placement in a rural or northern centre, including formal orientation and mentorship to ensure a successful transition.

The new process improves upon the old CAPE process by providing the supports necessary to allow applicants to adequately demonstrate their competencies to practice medicine in the rural and northern context while learning about health care in Manitoba. The additional mentorship component

provides a more comprehensive transition to practice in rural and northern areas.

The first pre-employment interviews were conducted in December 2006. Assessment results for the candidates who completed the assessment process are being reviewed and the College of Physicians and Surgeons will be making a determination of their eligibility for licensure in the near future. The second set of interviews was held in March 2007 and candidates are currently undergoing their three-month clinical assessment. The third session of pre-employment interviews are scheduled for August 2007. The target is to have forty practice ready candidates per year through the new assessment process.

The new assessment process will help ensure a successful placement of IMGs to medical practice in rural and northern Manitoba and will be a key link in improving recruitment, retention and the quality of patient care in the province.

High school students: our future health care professionals

Submitted by Wayne Heide, Administrative Director, Office of Rural & Northern Health (ORNH)

Manitoba's Office of Rural & Northern Health (ORNH) was established to develop and implement long-term strategies that will assist with the recruitment and retention of health care professionals for rural and northern Manitoba.

There is a significant body of research from Canada and other parts of the world that have established a direct correlation between where a health care professional originates and where they will end up practicing their profession, i.e., students who come from rural and northern communities are more likely to end up living and working in rural and northern communities once they have



Wayne Heide of the Office of Rural & Northern Health answers questions.

completed their professional training. The research also tells us that the earlier people are exposed to career options the greater the likelihood they will more seriously consider those options.

As a result of this research, the ORNH is employing as one of its strategies to address recruitment and retention, promoting health care careers to students in high school in rural and northern Manitoba communities. This takes two main forms; participating in larger career fairs and doing classroom presentation in different high schools throughout the province. By getting to these students who are more likely to end up living and working in rural and northern Manitoba with good information about opportunities and supports, the goal is to increase the number of rural and northern students who select careers in health care and ultimately end up practicing in rural and northern Manitoba communities. The ORNH also provides opportunities for students to do some more in-depth career exploration by helping to arrange job shadowing and volunteer opportunities.

Letting students know about career opportunities and training in health care is not enough to ensure that there will be more health care practitioners working in rural and northern Manitoba in the future. Efforts have to be made to keep these students connected to rural and northern Manitoba while they are in professional training. If we convince students that there are good career opportunities in health care and send them away to be trained, typically to a large urban centre, but we do not make an effort to stay connected to them; personally or professionally, we have done little to increase the likelihood that those individuals will return to rural or northern Manitoba to live and work.

Health care training is typically three or more years of post secondary education. The lives of people can change dramatically in that time and connections to their home communities need to be current and relevant to their personal and professional lives. This means that communities, in conjunction with their local and regional health care community have to make an ongoing effort to stay engaged with these students. Summer jobs, student placements and ongoing personal contact are essential parts of this process.

Everyone has a role to play in this process of increasing the pool of people who want to practice in rural and northern Manitoba. Parents and teachers need to foster interest in health care careers and let

resource organizations like the ORNH know who the students from their communities are that are interested in health care careers. The ORNH and health care training programs need to ensure that prospective students have current and accurate information about training opportunities and academic requirements to take that training. Communities and health care employers need to connect and stay connected to the students from their areas that are pursuing health care training and demonstrate that they are wanted and needed as health care professionals.

This is a long-term strategy that is investing in individuals who originate from and have connections to rural and northern Manitoba. When successful, this strategy will provide opportunities for good careers in rural and northern areas for people from those communities and help communities address shortages of health care professionals.

For more information on Manitoba's Office of Rural & Northern Health and its programs and services, visit the ORNH website at www.ornh.mb.ca.

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Nurse Practitioners help meet health needs

Working together for quality health delivery

By Kimberly Ballance, AMM Senior Policy Analyst

The term “Nurse Practitioner” (NP) has been in use for nearly 50 years, however increased interest in NPs to supplement health care delivery in Manitoba has led to a resurgence in interest in this medical profession. A Nurse Practitioner is a Registered Nurse (RN) who has additional training in health assessment, diagnosis and management. In Manitoba, legislation requires Nurse Practitioners to have both an undergraduate degree and a Masters degree with a nurse practitioner major. Currently, in Manitoba, there are approximately 50 practicing NPs.

The use of NPs in the Canadian health field can be seen as early as the 1960s, resulting from a number of factors including physician shortages, specialization, and the changing role of nurses in practice. Although the role of nurses was changing in practice, and was recognized by educators, there was minimal movement to formalize the role of NPs through legislation and regulation. Through the 1970s, many academic institutions began to tailor programs to these changing roles, however the role of NPs was highly dependant upon collaboration with and supervision by physicians, particularly in urban settings.

In the 1980s, a vast majority of NP initiatives disappeared. This was due to a perceived abundance of physicians, inadequate income levels, lack of legislation/regulation, low public awareness and poor support from public, policy-makers and other health professionals. In the 1990s a renewal of the health care system and amplified focus on efficient primary care led to an improved interest in the role of NPs. This increased awareness was pursued through formal legislation; regulation, including a defined scope of practice; and education for NPs.

Manitoba’s *Registered Nurses Act* was proclaimed in 2001 as new legislation and the *Extended Practice Regulation* came into force in June of 2005. This allowed RNs who met the requirements set out in the Extended Practice Regulation to have the authority to:

- Assess and diagnose client health/illness status
- Order and receive results of screening and diagnostic tests
- Prescribe drugs
- Perform minor surgical and invasive procedures.


RNs who registered on the extended practice register were then able to use the Registered Nurse (Extended Practice) designation. In order to harmonize terminology across Canada this will soon become the Nurse Practitioner (NP) designation.

NPs provide a range of health services with a target of promoting health and preventing illness. NPs work in collaboration with other health professionals such as physicians, RNs, pharmacists, nutritionists, social workers and therapists to ensure that patients receive the most complete and coordinated health care. NPs are increasingly recognized as a solution for alleviating current gaps and decreasing wait times in health delivery, particularly in rural and remote communities.

In rural settings NPs often manage the daily health needs within communities while the family physician rotates through a number of communities on a regular, but intermittent, basis. This coordination of medical professionals has been supported by the College of Family Physicians of Canada in its paper, *Primary Care and Family Medicine in Canada: A Prescription for Renewal in Canada (2000)*. Coordinated teams of medical professionals are seen as a quality model to deal with the health of communities in terms of increased access, quality of life and disease prevention. Although these models are operational and working well, there are not enough of them. The success of multidisciplinary teams in rural and remote communities demonstrates the potential of utilizing the full scope of skills represented by NPs and other professionals to meet the health needs of municipalities. The role of NPs in Manitoba is still evolving but there are numerous examples of positive collaborations between medical professionals and success stories for communities. An ongoing awareness of the role that all professionals play in the health care delivery system is vital in the creation of community health delivery models and subsequently, overall community health.

Sources: Canadian Nurses Association, *The Registered Nurses Act and Extended Practice Regulation*, College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba, University of Manitoba’s Manitoba Nursing Research Institute

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Profile of a Nurse Practitioner

Following the completion of her undergraduate nursing degree, Christy worked in adult acute, home care, pediatric acute and intensive care, primary care, northern nursing and as a nursing instructor. After working for a number of years in these areas, Christy wanted to have more responsibility for the health of her patients. With her love of nursing, a Masters in Nursing was a perfect fit. She graduated in 2006 from the U. of M. and began working as a Nurse Practitioner in the emergency room at Bethesda Hospital in Steinbach.

As the only NP employed by the southeast region RHA, Christy was challenged to develop collaborative relationships with fellow medical, nursing and allied health professionals. Christy and her colleagues developed a *Collaborative Practice Agreement*, a document outlining the role of NPs, and demonstrating a model of collaboration with patients, doctors, nurses, pharmacists and other therapists. The Collaborative Practice Agreement assisted in the education of staff on the scope of practice for NPs and aided in creating a positive work environment.

Christy's day-to-day role consists of seeing patients in the emergency room and attending to their health needs. Health promotion, disease prevention and education are part of the care she gives her patients. Currently the NP position in the Steinbach emergency room is part of a two-year pilot project.



Name: Christy Seniuk
Education: Undergraduate and Masters degrees from the University of Manitoba
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Salary: \$34/hour (based on a 0.8 schedule or approximately 31 hours/week)

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RHAs: a decade in review

By Kimberly Ballance, AMM Senior Policy Analyst

The Regional Health Authority (RHA) system in Manitoba is coordinated through the department of Manitoba Health. Manitoba made the decision to regionalize the administration and delivery of health care in 1996, and currently eight provinces have regionalized health services. Manitoba Health continues to organize a broad range of services and programs that are delivered through the 11 RHAs.

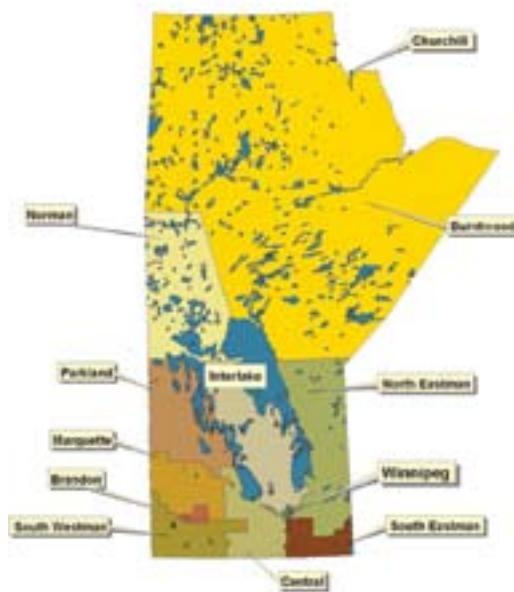
The decision to alter health care planning and delivery in Manitoba was a major change to the previous health structure. This model of health care put the responsibility in the hands of RHAs within a provincial policy framework. It allowed for the assessment and prioritization of health goals in a region while maintaining an integrated approach to the delivery of local services.

The RHAs are all structured slightly differently, however they tend to follow the same general formation. Each RHA is governed by a Board of Directors made up of representatives from the region. They communicate with their regional RHA Chief Executive Officer, who is responsible to direct information to program directors in areas specific to each RHA such as Community Health Services, Support Services, Facility Services, Programs and Standards, Chief Financial Officer, Human Resource Planning, Communications/Public Relations, Primary Care and Medical Services.

The Board and CEO also work closely with District Health Advisory Councils, Medical Advisory Councils and other stakeholder groups. Services and programs provided in each RHA are listed on their websites, but cover a large variety of health issues. Some services offered by RHAs include: primary health care, public health services, emergency medical services, audiology, community health offices, diabetes services, diagnostics, dietitians, handi-transit, public health promotion, home care, long term care, mental health services, palliative care, seniors resources, speech and language services, telehealth, and travel health information.

Ten years after changing to the current method of health care delivery, the RHA model is undergoing public scrutiny through a full external review. On April 10, Health Minister **Theresa Oswald** announced that an external review of the province's RHA system would be completed to make recommendations for improving health services.

The legislation responsible for RHAs is *The Regional Health Authorities Act*, created in 1996, which sets out the framework for RHA incorporation and defines the duties and responsibilities of RHAs and the Minister of Health. Together, the Minister of Health and the RHAs work to develop health policy, assess health status and ensure health planning and service delivery.



All RHAs and residents of Manitoba stand to benefit from the independent review, which aims to ensure that approaches to patient care continue to be modernized and improved while making the system effective and cost efficient. The mandate of the external review is to make recommendations to the Ministers of Health and Healthy Living on how to further enhance RHAs in the future.

Areas that have been targeted for review include: the RHA model, administration, accountability, opportunities for enhanced patient care, community participation and response to local needs. The external review committee will make recommendations to the Ministers of Health and Healthy Living by December 2007. This report will assist in guiding improvements to the delivery of health services in Manitoba.

If you wish to make a submission about the RHA system to the external review committee you can do so by sending a submission, by August 22, 2007, to:

RHA Review Committee
PO BOX 48065 RPO Lakewood,
Winnipeg, MB R2J 4A3
E-mail: rhareview@shaw.ca

RHA websites

- Assiniboine Regional Health Authority - <http://www.assiniboine-rha.ca/>
- Brandon Regional Health Authority - <http://www.bran-donrha.mb.ca/en/>
- Burntwood Regional Health Authority - <http://www.thompson.ca/dbs/brha/>
- Churchill RHA Inc. - www.churchillrha.mb.ca
- Interlake Regional Health Authority - www.irha.mb.ca
- NOR-MAN Regional Health Authority - www.norman-rha.mb.ca
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- Regional Health Authority - Central Manitoba Inc. - www.rha-central.mb.ca
- South Eastman Health/Sant  Sud-Est Inc. - www.seh-ealth.mb.ca
- Winnipeg Regional Health Authority - www.wrha.mb.ca



The Northern Ontario School of Medicine

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) is a joint initiative of Lakehead University in Thunder Bay and Laurentian University in Sudbury that targets students from Northern Ontario and is focused on servicing communities in the region. The NOSM offers a four-year MD program with a unique curriculum and multiple teaching and research sites distributed across Northern Ontario, including large, small, rural, remote and aboriginal communities. The NOSM's mandate is to be socially accountable to the diverse cultures of Northern Ontario.

The NOSM's education and training programs favour students who are likely to thrive in the challenging northern rural learning environment. The program is relatively new with the first intake year in 2005. The program can support 56 students per year, with approximately 90% coming from rural and remote locations in Northern Ontario. The program targets rural, aboriginal and francophone applicants to ensure that an accurate reflection of Northern Ontario demographics is achieved.

Each intake class is split into two groups, with Lakehead University taking 24 students and Laurentian University taking 32 students. The MD program focuses on students learning in small groups, with much work being completed at community learning sites supported by broadband communication information technology. The curriculum is clinically driven, while ensuring students gain

a strong grounding in core knowledge and skills including the basic sciences.

The program's first year has students working in small groups of eight for classroom learning. The program is unique in its approach to practical/clinical learning. In year one, students spend two half-days a week completing a rotation in practical settings. In their second year, students complete two clinical rotations in community settings, and in their third year they are required to complete an eight-month placement. Most medical students from other schools only begin clinical rotations in their third year of schooling. However, the NOSM has over 70 community learning sites throughout Northern Ontario in aboriginal, rural, and remote communities, large rural and small urban communities where students can increase their clinical experience throughout their entire degree. The fourth year is dedicated to ongoing clinical training in large hospitals in Thunder Bay and Sudbury.

NOSM's learning approach is patient-centered, focusing on people in their home/family/community context, through case-based learning. This Community Based Medical Education program has students learning not only in larger hospitals but also in other hospitals, health facilities, family practices and various community settings.

Residency Programs are offered throughout Northern Ontario by NOSM in collaboration with McMaster University and the

University of Ottawa. Postgraduate education is available in family medicine and the major general specialties of general internal medicine, general surgery, orthopedics, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, psychiatry and anesthesia. NOSM continues to build on current programs and work towards increasing the number of specialty residency posts and training programs in Northern Ontario. This expansion of postgraduate education will see a steady rise in the numbers of skilled physicians in Northern Ontario, even before there are graduates of the school's undergraduate program.

To continue the learning cycle, NOSM assists with Continuing Education and Professional Development (PD) for physicians in the region through a strong PD calendar. Graduate Studies programs offered by distance education will allow rural physicians to undertake higher university studies and career progression without leaving their towns or practices.

Community participation is seen as an essential part of the school's success. With students distributed across Northern Ontario, communities play a vital role in welcoming and supporting students so they feel part of the community and develop a particular understanding of living and working in a rural setting. Local NOSM Committees work with medical students throughout their clinical rotations to ensure that housing, recreation options and other support mechanisms are in place as required. Each community committee includes relevant stakeholders including municipal personnel who see this as an opportunity for physician recruitment through the demonstration of the quality of life in their community.

The structure of the NOSM program is seen as a positive step to encouraging physician recruitment in Northern Ontario. Similar programs that ran in the area before have seen approximately 60% of graduates remain in the area, and it is anticipated that two-thirds of the first graduating class in 2009 will remain in the region to service the communities that have assisted them throughout their education and training process.

Sources:

Many thanks to Dr. R. Strasser, Dean of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine for his assistance in the development of this article

The Northern Ontario School of Medicine website. Available at: <http://www.normed.ca>



Photo courtesy of NOSM

Tap or bottle?

A look at the health, environmental and economic implications of our water

By AMM Staff



The contamination of municipal water supply has been on Canadians' minds since the tragedies of Walkerton, ON and North Battleford, SK hit the national media. These incidents tarnished the reputation of municipal water supplies nation-wide. However, before permanently switching to bottled water, consider them through the larger lens of high quality municipal water treatment.

Health Canada says, "The responsibility for making sure drinking water supplies are safe is shared between all governments. The day-to-day responsibility of providing safe drinking water to the public generally rests with the provinces and territories, while municipalities usually oversee the day to day operation of the treatment facilities."

Tap water is monitored through Manitoba's *Drinking Water Quality Act*. Bottled water is monitored through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. They are regulated separately, therefore the quality standards are different, but both sets of standards are intended to protect the health of consumers. However, bottled water standards are less stringent and currently there are no real consequences if a bottler fails to meet the standards. It is also noteworthy that approximately 25% of bottled water is actually tap water that has been bottled.

It is important to recognize that bottled water is contributing to the environment in a negative way through the waste generated and energy expended in production and shipping. Plastic is the most common packaging material used in the bottled water industry and it adds up to about 1.5 million metric tonnes per year. Bottles are generally made from PVC plastic or PET plastic, which is made from fractions of natural gas or crude oil changed chemically into solid form. The manufacturing process releases a number

of known carcinogens, transportation of the bottles increases greenhouse gas emissions, and plastics are a significant component of waste streams making up about 6% of all litter. The industry has a large impact on air and water pollution.

Currently, many restaurants are declining to sell bottled water, opting for tap water instead. The driving force is environmental appeal. An increasingly environmentally educated public is incorporating sustainability into their behaviour, and toting a plastic bottle destined to clog a landfill for a thousand years is not going to show your affinity for the environment.

Cost is another major factor in opting for tap water. Let's face it – bottled water is expensive. Many people are complaining about the price of gasoline, yet on a volume basis, they are willing to pay more for bottled water. In 2005 alone, Canadians spent about \$653 million on bottled water with sales increasing by 20% in 2006. Bottled water, in fact, retails for up to 10,000 times as much as tap water, even when it is just tap water in a bottle. For a simple comparison, a litre of tap water in Canada costs an average of less than \$0.001 while a litre of bottled water sells for around \$2.50. Bottled water companies are convincing consumers (through expensive advertising campaigns) that bottled water is better tasting and purer than tap water.

Upon recognition that a water supply is potentially unsafe, bottled water is a good alternative. However, we must ensure that we are not ignoring the larger problem of accessing a quality water supply. Manitoba municipalities have a longstanding record of producing high quality drinking water for residents. Tap water is and should remain a public service in order to ensure everyone has access to high quality drinking water.

Bottled water defined:

Common terms used on labels to describe bottled water.

Spring Water: Bottled water derived from an underground formation from which water flows naturally to the surface of the earth containing less than 500 parts per million (ppm) of total dissolved solids.

Mineral Water: Bottled water that meets the definition of spring water except it contains more than 500 ppm of total dissolved solids.

Well Water: Bottled water which would meet the definition of spring water except it does not flow naturally to the surface of the earth. Instead it is tapped from a hole bored, drilled or otherwise constructed.

Artesian Water: Bottled water that would meet the definition of well water except it taps a confined aquifer in which the water level starts above the top of the aquifer.

Purified Water: Bottled water that has been produced by distillation, deionization or reverse osmosis. The source can be from a spring, well or a municipal water supply. Other suitable names for bottled water produced by one of the above processes include "Distilled Water", Deionized Water" and "Reverse Osmosis Water".

Carbonated Bottled Water: Bottled water that contains natural or added carbonation.

Sources:

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What's on your plate?

By Kreesta Doucette, Manitoba Food Charter Coordinator

Next time you're about to sit down to a council breakfast meeting, try this experiment. Ask yourself, *Where did this food come from? How much did it cost me? How much money went to the person who grew the ingredients? How much time went into processing, packaging and preparing it? Why did I choose to eat this particular food?* The answer to the last question might be because it just isn't cool to order the fruit plate when everyone is having over-easy and sausages. However, the previous questions might reveal some interesting facts. Food is something that all of us deal with every day. Many Manitobans make their livelihoods from it. Whether we grow it, buy it, cook it, or just eat it, there's more to food than just the taste.

We hear often in the news about food and our health, the increase in obesity and the risk of diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. In addition to the negative impacts on our communities and our health, these diseases are also expensive. Did you know that over 40% of the provincial budget goes towards health care? We are also facing declining farm populations and incomes, expensive food in northern communities, a loss in food skills such as cooking and preserving, and hunger. Over 40,000 Manitobans use food banks each month. Granted, the food system is a complex issue, but we can start somewhere.

As municipalities your work connects to food in many areas including economic development, food sector jobs, roads and transportation, waste management, health, and what kind of foods kids are getting at the local school.

Some ideas other municipalities have tried include doing research on purchasing policies and access to healthy food in municipal facilities. Finding out how the food sector impacts your local economy is a good start. Do you have healthy options at your office meetings, community centers and schools? You could support local residents by buying and eating locally produced foods. A switch to fair trade coffee means farmers in other parts of the world can get a better price. Are there businesses and partners in the community you can work with?

Does your community offer waste diversion and reduction programs such as recycling and household and agricultural com-

posting? How about getting your school and seniors home to share cooking skills.

Take a look at the impact of municipal policies on the food system and consider food policy when planning zoning, transportation and land use planning. Do you support your local farmers markets? Are there spaces for community gardens? Your municipal greening plan could include edible fruit trees and berry patches.

Are there hungry people in your community? If so can you work towards economic, employment, and transportation policies and programs for dignified food access? Are there nutrition programs available?

If you have food programs that are already working well, please let us know about them. We are launching the 2007 *Golden Carrot Awards* and someone from your community could be a winner.

The Manitoba Food Charter Organization is available to work with your municipality on developing an action plan to work towards a just and sustainable food system. If you have questions or comments, please contact us at 1-800-731-2638 or info@mbfoodcharter.ca. You can also visit our website: <http://www.manitobafoodsecurity.ca>.

And hey - next time you're at a breakfast meeting, order the fruit plate. Maybe a few other councillors will order it too. ☺



The author presented "Putting Municipalities on the Menu" at the 2007 M.O.S. in February. That presentation is available on the AMM website at <http://www.amm.mb.ca/PDF/Events/MOS/2007%20Presentations/FoodCharter.pdf>

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Moving PSAB forward – THE COMPLETE PICTURE

Submitted by Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs

Ready or not, municipal accounting practices are soon to be completely changed. The Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) has issued new financial reporting standards for government, bringing these practices more in line with the private sector. Preparing for these new standards will require an extraordinary effort on the part of municipal staff and strong support from their elected officials. In Manitoba, the changes are particularly extensive as we move to catch up with previous practices, and prepare for new standards at the same time.

The biggest change will happen in 2009 when municipalities will be required to include tangible capital assets (TCA) as part of their annual financial statements. It has been said, “This may well be the biggest financial accounting change made to municipal accounting in over a century.” Why? Municipalities are all about capital assets – and these assets are a key component in local government operations and the delivery of services to citizens. But, currently they are not reflected in the financial statements except in a hit-and-miss way.

Citizens are demanding more transparency and accountability from all levels of government and these statements no longer fit the bill. The statements are prepared on a cash basis, with minimal disclosure requirements and little information on TCA. Given that TCA represent the most significant assets owned by municipalities, it follows that they should be incorporated into the

financial statements. TCA includes items such as roads, buildings, vehicles, equipment, land, public utility systems, computer hardware and bridges.

In contrast, the new statement format will include not only TCA and their amortization, but also the accrual of liabilities when they are incurred and not when they are paid (such as the cost of landfills), and the consolidation of entities that are under the control or shared control of the municipality.

What are the benefits?

PSAB GAAP standardizes public body financial recording practices across Canada. This increases the public’s confidence in municipal financial statements and permits the comparison of municipalities not only within the Province but also across provincial jurisdictions.

Municipal councils and administrators are entrusted with the stewardship of public resources. PSAB GAAP enhances public transparency and accountability as the financial statements provide a summarized but “full picture” of a municipality’s financial situation. This means that councils will have better information to make important decisions that affect the long-term sustainability of their community.

The recognition and amortization of TCA in the financial statements will provide information on the full cost of providing goods and services. Under the current system council decisions can be made without directly taking into consideration the full

cost of an asset. With the new standards councils are in fact required to acknowledge the cost of using the asset while at the same time setting the cash aside for replacement. By amortizing TCA the cost of using the asset to provide the service is recognized. As a further benefit, including TCA in the financial statements will also provide information to the reader on the remaining useful life of a municipality’s TCA. It gives the reader an idea of when assets will have to be replaced.

When must PSAB be implemented?

By December 31, 2009 all municipalities will be required to prepare their financial statements in accordance with PSAB GAAP. Currently, the federal government, the three territories, and most provincial governments report in accordance with PSAB. Municipal governments in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Nova Scotia have been complying with current PSAB standards and recommendations for several years. The City of Winnipeg is currently the only local government in the Province that has adopted PSAB GAAP.

What if our municipal financial report is not PSAB compliant by December 31, 2009?

Your municipal auditor will be required to include with the audited financial statement a



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qualified audit opinion that the statements do not comply with the requirements of PSAB GAAP. A qualified audit opinion may attract unwanted negative public attention and raise public apprehension over a council's management of the public purse.

A more direct result is the effect that non-compliance could have on receipt of your Federal Gas Tax funding. The Gas Tax dollars are contingent on municipalities preparing PSAB compliant information. Compliance will ensure that there is not an interruption in the Federal Gas Tax payments committed to your municipality.

How will PSAB be implemented in Manitoba?

To oversee the implementation of PSAB, a Steering Committee was formed, comprised of representatives from the AMM, MMAA, and Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs. The Committee will provide leadership and direction to the project and ensure that key milestones are met.

A project team, resourced by both the AMM and the Department, will develop and provide all municipalities with a practical set of reference manuals along with training, advice and one-on-one assistance to Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) and finance staff to address the technical issues created by the move to PSAB.

The adoption of PSAB GAAP is a major undertaking. There will be a significant one-time or 'bulge' effort to prepare that first set of PSAB financial statements for 2009. The implementation plan addresses the magnitude of the task by breaking the process into manageable pieces, with recommended milestones to be achieved by key target dates. The timeline is tight.

What can elected officials do to help ensure PSAB is implemented on schedule?

Encourage your administrative staff to attend training sessions offered by the PSAB project team. These sessions will explain the PSAB requirements and your staff will then be able to explain the basics of PSAB to you, the elected officials. Training for CAOs and finance staff is critical to ensure the successful implementation of PSAB. Registration for these training sessions is being managed through the AMM.

Council and the CAO will need to evaluate the amount of time and resources that will be required for the implementation of PSAB. It is also important for municipalities to ensure that their computer software program will be able to meet the requirements of PSAB GAAP.

What are the first steps?

The first major step towards PSAB compliance is the recording of the tangible capital assets (TCA) owned by the municipality. A TCA reference manual has been written and posted on the AMM website for CAO use. Twenty-two training sessions for municipal staff have been scheduled, beginning in late June until the end of September. Registrations are now being accepted through the AMM.

The first two major milestones related to TCA are:

- Identification of all municipal TCA by December 31, 2007; and
- Valuation of these TCA by March 31, 2008.

After March 31, 2008 CAOs and finance staff will need to devote time and attention to the other remaining implementation issues.

Although it seems that there is no time to lose in preparing for the change, these new municipal accounting practices will have many positive effects. The financial statement will be more readable and understandable, presenting a clear picture of the overall financial position of the municipality. Perhaps most importantly for elected officials is the fact that PSAB GAAP accounting will provide the full cost for providing services and more clearly identify the effects that funding decisions have on the financial position of the municipality. ♣



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Central



Central Region delegates.



RM of Macdonald Reeve Rodney Burns welcomes delegates.



(L-R) CAOs Ron Hayward (RM of Grey), Diane Toews (RM of Roland), and Judy Young (RM of Pembina).

Eastern



Manitoba Hydro's Rob Cox with AMM Executive Director Joe Masi.

← Reeve Don Halbert, RM of Lac du Bonnet, chats with Reeve Art Bergmann, RM of Ste. Anne.

Midwestern



AMM Executive Director Joe Masi chats with former RM of Langford CAO Sheila Mowat and Town of Gladstone CAO Louise Blair.



Attendees were welcomed by Reeve Kathy Jasiencyk, RM of Langford, and Mayor Bob Durston, Town of Neepawa.



Midwestern delegates.

Northern

This year's Northern Mayors, Reeves and CAOs meeting was held by conference call due to inclement weather.

Interlake



AMM Rural VP Doug Dobrowolski chats with attendees.



(L-R) AMM Urban VP Shirley Kalyniuk, RM of Rosser CAO Estelle Thomson and AMM Interlake Rural Director Alice Bourgouin.



(L-R) Mayor Don Pepe, Town of Winnipeg Beach; AMM President Ron Bell; and Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth Peter Bjornson.

Parklands



Parklands Region delegates.

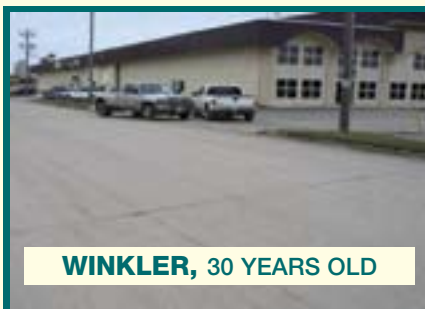


Mayor Carrie Walker, Village of McCreary, with Reeve Maurice Maguet, RM of Ste. Rose.



AMM Parklands Rural Director Robert Misko and Mayor Doug Hazlitt, Town of Roblin.

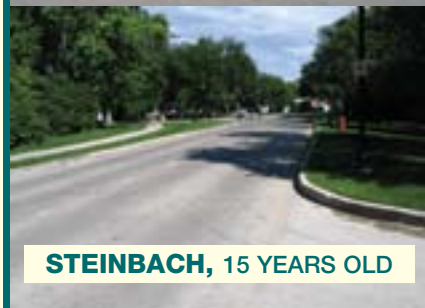
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Health and Safety on sidewalks and boulevards

By Bernice R. Bowley, Fillmore Riley LLP

A review of municipalities' obligations for maintenance of sidewalks and boulevards is apropos of the special Health and Healthy Living feature in this issue of *Municipal Leader*. Slips and falls and injuries on municipal sidewalks and boulevards are a fairly common occurrence. Such injuries can be prevented, as can lawsuits, by a careful program of inspection and maintenance, accompanied by thorough recording of work performed on log records.

Section 386 of *The Municipal Act*, S.M. 1996, c. 58, Cap. M225, sets out a municipality's duty of care for sidewalks (paraphrased):

386(2) A municipality is not liable for loss or damage in respect of a municipal road ...

c) caused by ... any construction, obstruction or erection, or ... the situation, arrangement or disposition of any earth, rock, tree or other material or thing, adjacent to or in, along or on the portion of the road that is not designed for vehicle use; or

(d) caused by rain, hail, snow, ice, sleet

or slush on the road or on a sidewalk adjacent to or along the road, unless the municipality is grossly negligent.

The classic definition of gross negligence by the Supreme Court of Canada is "very great negligence." That's not particularly helpful. Rather, a couple of cases can better illustrate the meaning.

In *Occhino v. Winnipeg (City)*, a woman slipped and fell while walking on the ice and snow covered grass section of a boulevard near the junction of a sidewalk. She had exited a transit bus and walked some 18 feet across the boulevard before slipping and injuring herself. She decided to walk on the boulevard because she felt the surface of the concrete pad around the bus stop was too slippery.

The applicable provision of *The City of Winnipeg Act* was similar to s. 386(2) of *The Municipal Act* and the trial judge found the city to have been grossly negligent in performing its obligations. He also found the plaintiff to be 50% "contributorily negligent" for walking on the grassy portion of boulevard over rough and uneven icy snow. Had she walked on

the sidewalk, the likelihood of her falling would have been greatly lessened.

The City's appeal was allowed. The court discussed the City's duty of sanding as follows:

If sand had been applied, especially on the boulevard portion, it might easily have sunk through the snow, onto the grass and thus have had little effect given the climatic conditions. I doubt if there is a responsibility on the part of the City to sand the grass boulevards even though some snow removal is effected at bus stops. It is too high a responsibility to impose on the City to regularly sand all the boulevards, which, in this part of the world, are snow covered from November until the end of March, if not later.

I note again that plaintiff did not fall on the sidewalk or on the street but on the boulevard.

There is no doubt that the municipal duty to keep streets in repair encompasses a duty to protect the public from the hazards of snow and ice upon the sidewalks. The duty to protect the public from the hazard of snow and ice is far from absolute. The City is not an insurer of safety. It must take reasonable steps to keep the sidewalks free of dangerous conditions, but its failure to do so does not necessarily result in liability to everyone who falls and is injured. For liability to ensue, the cause of the injury must be more than a mere breach of duty. The breach must be of such magnitude that it can properly be described as gross negligence.

However, while the *Occhino* decision might suggest that gross negligence is something quite egregious, different circumstances will dictate a different meaning of gross negligence. In *Bras v. The City of Winnipeg*, Winnipeg had experienced a significant, although not seasonally unusual, ice storm. Approximately 8.5 millimetres of precipitation fell between Friday and Sunday, in a combination of rain, freezing rain, snow flurries, and ice pellets. The plaintiff slipped and fell at a fairly busy intersection near her home on the following Tuesday. Ten witnesses gave evidence on



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“Slips and falls and injuries on municipal sidewalks and boulevards are a fairly common occurrence.”

behalf of the plaintiff to the effect that the intersection was very icy and that several people had fallen there over the weekend.

The City had an extensive and thorough policy on snow clearing and ice removal (71 pages long). Among other things, streets were prioritised based on traffic counts and were to be sanded according to those priorities. Unfortunately, the City's evidence as to the actions it took to reduce the risks created by the ice storm was less than satisfactory. The City's log sheets for sanding were completed in such a way that, although they showed sanding trucks were in the area, it could not be determined whether the intersection where the plaintiff fell was actually sanded. Inspectors were on duty to inspect the streets on an ongoing basis to ensure that acceptable standards were met. None gave evidence about the intersection having been inspected. No worker was presented to say that the intersection was sanded. The sanding, if it took place, was insufficient, and it took too long for the City to perform the sanding.

The court referred to other decisions in finding the City liable for the accident on the basis that it was grossly negligent:

The law is well-settled that if a municipality permits a slippery, icy sidewalk in a thickly peopled part of the municipality to remain unprotected or ignores it altogether, and some one is injured, that would constitute gross negligence.

Generally, if a municipality has a system of regular inspection and sanding in place, and can document that the procedures were followed, it will have discharged its duty even where an accident occurs. Of course, sanding – or other measures taken – in themselves must be reasonable. This means that extra caution is needed where particular danger is known, and a greater standard of repair is required in areas that receive a high volume of pedestrian traffic.

As indicated above, injuries and claims can be avoided by instituting an effective and timely system of inspection and maintenance and ensuring that that system is followed and properly documented. ☺

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Meet your front-line MTCML Official Supplier reps

In the next few issues of *The Leader*, we will be introducing readers to the representatives of the MTCML supplier companies that provide goods and services to Manitoba municipalities. These are those hardy individuals who travel our great province to ensure municipalities have what they need to conduct their day-to-day business serving Manitobans.

Photo
not available

Jaime Griner - Westgro Horticultural Supplies Inc.

Jaime joined Westgro six years ago and has been involved in sales for the last year or so. Westgro Horticultural Supplies was formed 12 years ago when two companies – Plant Products (serving Eastern Canada) and EverGro (serving BC) – decided they wanted to merge in order to do business across the entire country.

Westgro markets mosquito larvicide and herbicide to MTCML member municipalities. The company also sells fertilizer in Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Jaime says the best thing about being in municipal sales is meeting such a wide variety of people. “I’ve met some wonderful individuals through the AMM and the MTCML,” Jaime tells *The Leader*.

When she isn’t hard at work, Jaime enjoys putting in the yard and “just hanging out” with her 11-year-old son Derryl.



Jim Freedy - Dust Free Road Maintenance

Dust Free Road Maintenance has been providing dust control and road stabilization products for almost 20 years and Jim Freedy has been a member of the Dust Free team for the past five years.

Since 2006 was an election year, Jim says it has been an interesting challenge re-introducing himself and his company’s products to his municipal clientele.

Jim enjoys meeting new people and says the favourite part of the job is his municipal clients, “who are always willing to listen. Whether it’s about new products or new ways of doing what they’re already doing, they want to learn.”

Speaking of new products, Jim wants MTCML members to know about *X-hesion*, a dust control and road stabilization product that results in a road surface that is compact, water resistant and durable. *X-hesion* is a non-chloride proprietary formulation of an agriculturally derived complex organic polymer and binding agent.

Away from work, Jim is a family man with two children and two grandchildren. He enjoys helping his kids with renovations of their respective homes. He also likes to play golf, but with the dust control season in full swing, won’t get out much until later in the season. That is why he likes to get down to Phoenix every January for 10 days on the links.



Peter Pellatt – Prairie Fuel Advisors Inc.

For the past 11 years, Peter Pellatt has been the owner and manager of Prairie Fuel Advisors, manager of the AMM’s Fuel Supply Program. Prior to that, Peter taught Business Administration at the University of Manitoba for 10 years before moving to Alberta. Peter was also a part owner of Pacific Coastal Airlines in Vancouver for a decade, where he learned about the fuel business and how to negotiate better supply contracts with the major fuel and oils suppliers.

Prairie Fuel Advisors helps municipalities reduce their overall cost of fuels, oils, greases, and lubricants by negotiating better supply contracts for the total volume of these products consumed by member municipalities in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba (approximately 44,000,000 litres per year) than individual municipalities can obtain on their own. According to Peter, “The two most valuable features of the fuel supply contracts for AMM and MTCML members are the control of all price changes to ensure they are always tied to the underlying changes in the wholesale cost of fuel, and the one week’s advance notice to members of all upcoming price changes. These terms eliminate a great deal of administrative work for all members and eliminate the challenge of trying to ‘outguess’ agents as to the direction and timing of process.”

Peter’s work keeps him in constant contact with the AMM office and he says the best part of dealing with the Association is the quality of people working at the AMM and the sense of appreciation his organization receives for helping MTCML members reduce their overall cost of fuel and lubricants.

Away from the Prairie Fuel Advisors office, Peter enjoys spending time with his “great” family (four children ages 17 to 22 still at home and two adult children who have given Peter and dentist wife Anne five grandchildren). Peter and Anne enjoy breaks at the family cottage on Pigeon Lake and traveling. He is also a sessional instructor at the University of Alberta’s School of Business, leading classes in Business Ethics and Small business Management.

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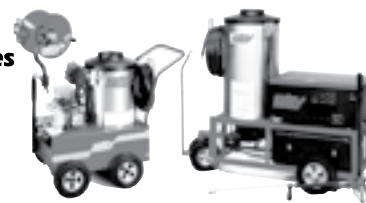
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