



RC

RURAL COUNCILLOR

VOLUME 49 number 1
SPRING 2016 ISSUE

PUBLISHED BY THE SASKATCHEWAN
ASSOCIATION OF RURAL MUNICIPALITIES

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ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Got Gravel?; Voicing Rural Concerns to the Federal Government;
Planning for Hazardous Lands; The Importance of Volunteers;
Significance of MREP in Rural SK; Network Discovery Days; A
Community Well Success Story; The Effective Rural Council;
SARM's Plant Management Program



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So I thank you. My wife and the whole flock thanks you, as does Mother Nature.

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RURAL COUNCILLOR

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VOLUME 49 number 1 SPRING 2016 ISSUE

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2260 McIntyre Street
Regina, SK S4P 2R9

T (306) 522-9326

F (306) 522-0923

E info@benchmarkpr.ca

W www.benchmarkpr.ca

Editor

Pat Rediger

Associate Editor

Ashley Leugner (SARM)

Layout & Design

Nicole Williams

Advertising

Warren Nerby/
Don Shalley

SARM Board

President, Ray Orb, Cupar

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Wendy Gowda, Leroy (ex-Officio)

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Saskatchewan Association

of Rural Municipalities

200 - 2221 Cornwall Street

Regina, SK S4P 2L1

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OUR VISION

OUR MISSION

By being the rural voice, SARM will effectively lead autonomous municipalities in creating a vibrant, diverse economy resulting in a strong, sustainable Saskatchewan.

SARM delivers timely, dependable programs and services to meet the needs of its members while influencing government policy and facilitating municipalities to work together to foster rural development and build strong, sustainable communities.



Voicing rural concerns at the **FEDERAL LEVEL**

BY RAY ORB SARM PRESIDENT

GREETINGS to all council members and administrators.

Writing an article about the economy is very timely since the issue is front and centre, especially since some commodity prices have suffered sharp reductions. As of January 19, 2016 crude oil has dipped just below the \$30/bbl mark, and the Canadian dollar has a value of 69 cents against the U.S. Dollar. While our low dollar is good for export sales, the low commodity prices (especially in the crude oil market) are drastically below the cost of production.

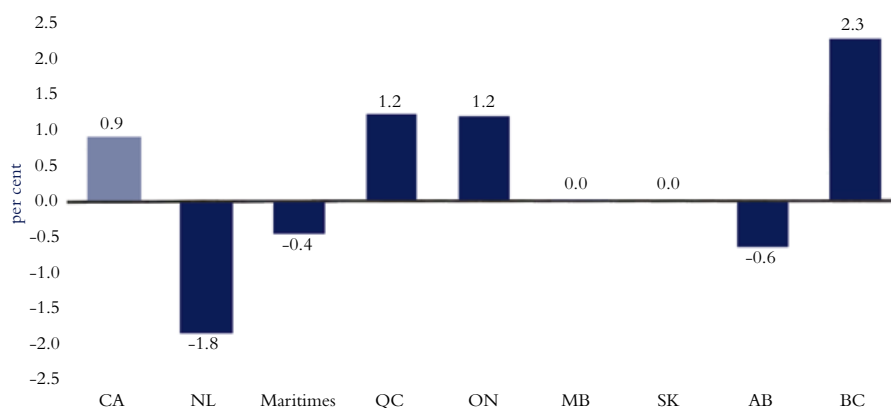
SARM always provides budget submissions to both the federal and provincial governments, and we were especially eager to do so this year.

We were fortunately given the opportunity to present in person to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Federal Minister of Finance, Francois-Philippe Champagne in Saskatoon on January 15. We relayed our concern that the rural municipalities in Saskatchewan are not receiving a fair share of infrastructure funding, especially through the New Building Canada Fund, including the Small Communities component.

Recently, we were surprised to hear that the federal government is considering a stimulus package that may be directed to the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. Although we aren't 100 per cent sure if and how this will happen, we are certainly going to add our voice to the debate about where the proposed economy-boosting funding should be directed.

There is plenty of need for rural infrastructure since MREP (our road and

Growth in Employment Between December 2014 and December 2015



Source: Statistics Canada, Department of Finance calculations

bridge program) saw two funding reductions last year when the program was reduced from \$25 million to \$16 million and then reduced by a further \$2 million.

MREP road and bridge projects that were deferred from 2015 and others that were turned down through the PTIC should be considered as shovel ready projects and be eligible for any new federal stimulus money.

What better place to spend stimulus money than in the resource sector (including agriculture) that generates a good portion of our provincial GDP in the first place!

The importance of agriculture to our provincial and federal economy is of even more importance due to the dramatic downturn of crude oil prices. Not to be overlooked in our submission, we made appeals to the federal government regarding two important safety net programs. One to have the AgriStability coverage re-instated to 85 per cent from

the current 70 per cent level and the other to have Agri-invest contributions levels re-instated to former levels.

SARM's belief is that farmers should enroll in safety net programs and not necessarily expect ad hoc payments; however, senior levels of government should not tinker with properly functioning programs either. This would go a long way to ensure financially viable farms and long-term sustainability for the agriculture sector.

A pitch was made to improve connectivity in rural Saskatchewan, in particular to improve both internet and cell phone coverage, which is an economic and a public safety issue.

We have heard the message loud and clear that poor coverage is a real issue for both business expansion and as an attraction to people thinking about moving into rural areas (especially with young families).

We voiced our support as a proponent for the Energy East pipeline and support of Premier Wall's opposition to a national carbon tax that could severely hurt an export oriented province like ours.

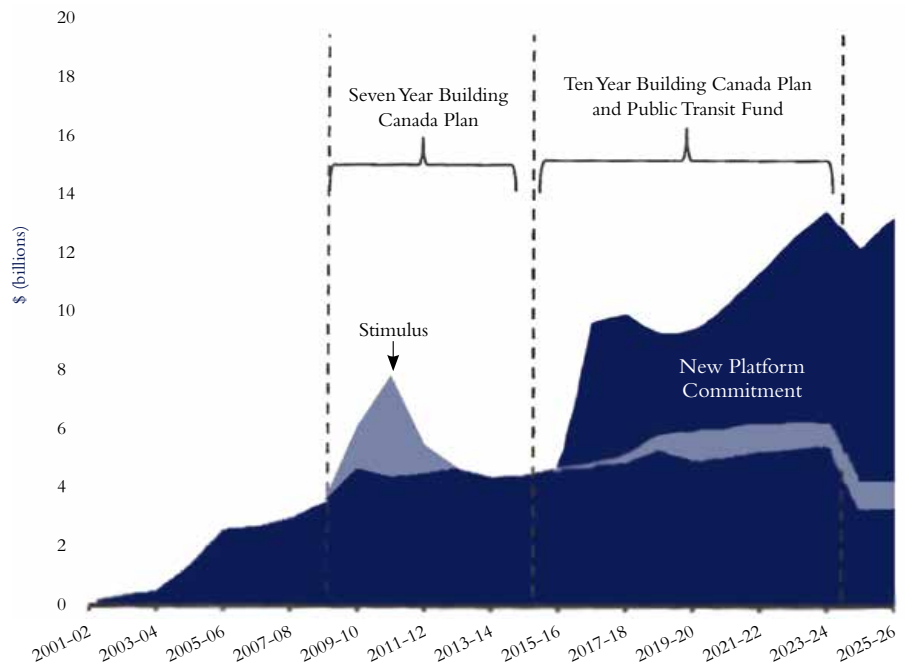
We believe that carbon sequestration is invaluable and that farmers and ranchers should be credited for the stewardship they are accomplishing by storing carbon in their land each and every year, as well as for what they have stored in past years, too.

We reiterated the need for an improved level of service for grain transportation by rail and are hopeful that the federal government will look at the Canadian Transportation Agency review and make recommendations towards the more timely and efficient movement of grain in order to prevent another fiasco such as what took place in 2013/14.

We are requesting that the federal government undertake a thorough review of the DFAA guidelines and that a long and serious look is taken at the National Disaster Mitigation program in order to address areas of flooding in our province.

Our federal budget submission in its entirety can be found on SARM's web-

Federal Spending on Provincial, Territorial and Municipal Infrastructure



Note: Figure is based on the Liberal Party platform. Source: Finance Canada and Infrastructure Canada

site, www.sarm.ca, under Advocacy and Submissions. Please give it a read, and let us know if you have any questions.

I hope everyone can attend our annual convention in March, and until then, all the best and be safe in your travels.



Recycle Saskatchewan is the trusted voice and champion of recycling within the province of Saskatchewan. Diligently promoting responsible recycling within our province and awareness of each of the six Product Management Programs, Recycle Saskatchewan (RS) is changing the way Saskatchewan residents steward the land and divert unnecessary waste from landfills.

Our Members



recyclesaskatchewan.ca



**Ombudsman
Saskatchewan**
Promoting Fairness

OMBUDSMAN SASKATCHEWAN: promoting fair provincial (and now municipal) government services

BY GREG SYKES GENERAL COUNSEL, OMBUDSMAN SASKATCHEWAN

ON November 19, 2015, the Legislative Assembly gave the Ombudsman for the Province of Saskatchewan authority to investigate the administrative decisions and actions of Saskatchewan's municipal entities and their council members, including allegations of conflict of interest. But what does Ombudsman Saskatchewan do? And how does the Ombudsman decide what is fair?

INTRODUCTION

Ombudsman Saskatchewan first opened on May 3, 1973, taking about 300 complaints in its first eight months. Mary McFadyen was appointed as the province's sixth Ombudsman on April 1, 2014. With a staff of 24 working from Regina and Saskatoon offices, Ombudsman Saskatchewan now handles about 3,000 complaints per year.

Ombudsman Saskatchewan provides citizens with a unique opportunity to have their complaints about provincial – and now municipal – government services investigated and considered fairly and impartially.

OMBUDSMAN 101

Government Organizations within the Ombudsman's Jurisdiction

Like the Provincial Auditor, the Ombudsman is an officer of the Legislative Assembly who is independent from the government. Under *The Ombudsman Act, 2012*, the Ombudsman has broad powers to investigate decisions, acts, omissions and recommendations of provincial ministries, government agencies, and publicly-funded health entities. Now the Ombudsman also has

the authority to investigate complaints about Saskatchewan's municipal entities and their council members, including allegations of conflict of interest.

Government agencies include Crown Corporations, commissions, boards and agencies whose members or directors are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council or are otherwise responsible to the Crown in carrying out their work. Publicly-funded health entities include the regional health authorities, the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, and "health care organizations" as defined in *The Regional Health Services Act* and prescribed in its regulations. Municipal entities include cities, towns, villages, resort villages, rural municipalities and northern municipalities, along with their councils, council committees and corporations owned by municipalities. A council member is any member of a council (including the mayor or reeve), a council committee, a controlled corporation or any other body established by a council.

Ombudsman Saskatchewan does not have jurisdiction over federal government institutions or private entities. We cannot investigate decisions, orders or omissions of courts, judges, or justices of the peace made in any action or proceeding before them. Nor are we authorized to investigate decisions, recommendations, acts or omissions of lawyers for the Crown in relation to proceedings.

Promoting Fairness in Government

Ombudsman Saskatchewan has the authority to investigate the actions and decisions of provincial and municipal government entities (including their

officers and employees) made in the exercise of any power, duty or function conferred or imposed by an Act. Generally, a person complaining to us must have been personally aggrieved by the action or decision. We respond to complaints, but we may also investigate on the Ombudsman's own initiative.

Complaining to the Ombudsman is an avenue of last resort. Before contacting us, a person must have first tried to resolve the issue with the government organization, including using any available review or appeal processes. We often refer complainants back to these processes to get a final decision. If the complainant still thinks the outcome is unfair, he or she can re-contact us.

When we first take a complaint, we try to resolve it using non-adversarial approaches such as facilitated communication, negotiation, mediation, conciliation and coaching. If this is not successful or appropriate, we may formally investigate the complaint and make recommendations to the government intended to correct the issue and address the complaint.

The Ombudsman is required to issue a report after an investigation if the Ombudsman believes:

- A decision, recommendation, act or omission appears to be contrary to law, unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, improperly discriminatory or done in keeping with a rule of law, a provision of an Act, or a practice that is unreasonable, unjust, oppressive or improperly discriminatory, based on a mistake of law or fact, or wrong;
- A statutory power or right has been exercised for an improper purpose,

on irrelevant grounds, or on the taking into account of irrelevant considerations; or

- Reasons should have been given for a decision, recommendation, act or omission.

These are the fairness standards to which Ombudsman Saskatchewan holds ministries, government agencies, publicly-funded health entities and municipal entities accountable.

If the investigation is about an employee or contractor of a government entity, the report must be provided to the administrative or executive head of the entity (for example the administrator of a rural municipality or the CEO of a Crown Corporation). If the investigation involves the conduct of a council member, the Ombudsman must report to the mayor or reeve. If the investigation is about the reeve or mayor, the Ombudsman has to report to the Minister of Government Relations.

What does it mean to be fair?

Ombudsman Saskatchewan trains the public and civil servants not about what to do when we call, but about what to do so we don't call. It teaches three aspects of fairness – procedural, substantive and relational fairness – using its fairness triangle (right), which is based on Christopher Moore's satisfaction triangle in *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict* (3rd ed.).

Generally, procedural fairness means giving a person affected by a decision reasonable notice that it will be made, a meaningful opportunity to state his or her case, access to the information being considered, and an opportunity to challenge information being used against him or her. Decision-makers must be thorough, impartial and honest and give meaningful and understandable reasons. Substantively fair decisions are reasonable and made with proper legal authority. They are not discriminatory or oppressive. Relational fairness is about being courteous, timely and direct. It is about taking the time to listen, being approachable and respecting confidentiality. It is about being honest, forthright and clear about what the decision-maker can and cannot do. Sometimes, relational fairness is about apologizing. Many complaints to the Ombudsman are about relational fairness.

THE FAIRNESS TRIANGLE



WWW.OMBUDSMAN.SK.CA

SUBSTANTIVE - What Was Decided?

- Did government have the legal authority to make the decision?
- Was the decision based on relevant information?
- Was the decision just and not oppressive?
- Was the decision correct in fact and in law?

PROCEDURAL - How Was it Decided?

- Was the person notified that a decision was going to be made and what it would be based on?
- Did the person have an opportunity to review the information and provide alternative or contrary information?
- Was all relevant information fully and fairly considered?
- Were all decisions correctable and open to review?
- Were adequate reasons for the decision provided to the person?
- Was the decision-maker free of – and seen to be free of – bias?

RELATIONAL - How Was I Treated?

- Was government approachable?
- Was confidentiality respected?
- Was the government agency honest and forthright?
- Was an apology offered if a mistake was made?

The fairness triangle was developed from the concept of the satisfaction triangle, in: Moore, Christopher (2003). *The Mediation Process: Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers

Gathering Information and Maintaining Confidentiality

Our staff may require any person to be given information or produce any document or data related to a matter being investigated. Typically, our investigators do their work informally, interviewing complainants, public servants and other witnesses, and gathering emails, reports and other documents. However, the Ombudsman may hold formal hearings, summon witnesses and subpoena documents.

There are rules of law that normally require public servants to withhold information that, if disclosed, would be injurious to the public interest, and statutes requiring secrecy or creating duties to not disclose information. These do not apply to the Ombudsman. But this does not mean the information provided to us automatically becomes public. Our investigations are done in private. Ombudsman staff must keep the information they obtain in the course of their work confidential. However, the Ombudsman may publicly report about any information the Ombudsman considers necessary to establish grounds for a conclusion or recommendation.

Making Recommendations

The Ombudsman may recommend: (a) that a matter be referred to an appropriate authority for further consideration; (b) that an omission be rectified; (c) that a decision be cancelled or varied; (d) that any practice on which a decision, recommendation, act or omission was based be altered or reviewed; (e) that any law on which a decision, recommendation, act or omission was based be reconsidered; (f) that reasons be given for any decision, recommendation, act or omission; or (g) that any other steps be taken.

If accepted, Ombudsman recommendations can be the basis for remedies that are not otherwise available. For example, if the Ombudsman recommends it, a government agency or municipality may reconsider a decision and change it – even if statutory provisions state that the original decision cannot be appealed, challenged or otherwise called into question.

THE SASKATCHEWAN APPROACH

Appropriate Case Resolution

Initially focused only on formal investigations and determining whether complaints were substantiated, over the years, we have explored non-adversarial ways to resolve complaints. In 1998, we introduced alternative dispute resolution. Today – along with formal investigations – coaching, facilitated communication, negotiation and mediation are fully integrated into our range of services. We now choose the most appropriate dispute resolution method based on the circumstances of each complaint.

Standard of Review

Courts and tribunals review administrative decisions to a standard that ensures minimally acceptable levels of substantive and procedural fairness are met with due deference to decision makers' expertise and mandate. Because Ombudsman recommendations are not binding, we do not have to defer to minimum legal standards. We can and do strive to raise the bar of fairness in provincial and municipal government institutions.

Though we pay close attention to administrative law and always consider decision-makers' expertise, the Ombudsman may ask a government institution – a municipality or a council, for example – to do something it believes is more fair than current legal standards require. To be successful with this approach, we must treat government entities with same substantive, procedural and relational fairness for which we advocate.

Coercion vs. Persuasion

The Ombudsman can exercise coercive influence by issuing public reports. While this is appropriate in certain cases, we try to persuade ministries, agencies and municipalities to be fair and do the right thing without us "going public." When the Ombudsman does issue a public report, we provide appropriate notice to the government entities involved, and, depending on the subject matter, to council members or members of the Legislative Assembly.

By engendering openness and mutual respect, showing a willingness to learn, and encouraging government entities to take a lead role in solving the complaints about themselves, Ombudsman Saskatchewan aims for changes that are long lasting and farther reaching. It generally takes more time and effort to build a respectful, trusting relationship, but it creates lasting efficiency as government entities are willing to work with us informally. Ultimately, there are fewer complaints to the Ombudsman when government entities incorporate the principles of fairness into their decisions and interactions with citizens.

Seeking Greater Fairness

The Ombudsman's mandate is to promote greater fairness – to encourage fair decisions and behaviour in government. By providing a range of free, appropriate complaint resolution services, Ombudsman Saskatchewan enhances fairness for citizens who have exercised all other available, reasonable options. By using persuasion and striving to raise the bar of administrative fairness, the Ombudsman promotes lasting positive enhancements to the delivery of provincial and municipal government services.

Contacting Ombudsman Saskatchewan

Ombudsman Saskatchewan has reached out to municipalities to introduce the Ombudsman and to provide information about how we do our work. The Ombudsman has been invited to speak at various municipal conferences and meetings, and we are continuing to talk with municipal officials.

If you have questions or would like more information about the Ombudsman or Ombudsman Saskatchewan, please visit www.ombudsman.sk.ca or call 1-800-667-9787.

This is an adaptation of an article titled, Ombudsman Saskatchewan: Promoting Fairer Government, that appeared in the Fall 2013 edition of Bar Notes published by the Saskatchewan Branch of the Canadian Bar Association.



The importance of **VOLUNTEERS**

BY JAY B. MEYER SARM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

VOLUNTEERS have a tremendous impact on our communities. They are looked at as one of the most important resources communities possess. One will see volunteers on boards, committees and even councils across the province.

Most volunteers are busy people, yet they choose to donate many hours of their time. Whether it's early morning, late evening or below zero weather, they are giving back and helping others. Quite often, their hard work results in minimized operations costs to our people and communities and saves resources. Without these volunteers, many projects, groups and initiatives would not happen.

As time goes by, 'veteran' volunteers are scaling back on their volunteerism. New volunteers must step up to fill the void.

Volunteering is not an easy task as, at times, one influences the process of change, which some people don't embrace. We must remember that it is important to recognize volunteers for their efforts and dedication. A simple smile or thank you is all it takes for individuals to continue to be motivated and keep working towards bettering our communities. Volunteering is part of the democratic process as one has the ability to have an active vote in shaping how

the world looks. Volunteering gives you an opportunity to learn about yourself, your community and your government.

Let's continue to assist our communities by volunteering. Not only does it create a sense of community pride, but it also creates a sense of purpose and teaches skills one may not learn elsewhere. Let's continue to bring people together, strengthen our communities and make a difference.

Thank you to all who volunteer on boards, committees and councils throughout our province. Your dedication does not go unnoticed.



invites SARM Delegates to
be our guests at the
Registration Reception



SARM Convention

Evraz Place, Queensbury Convention Centre, Salons A, B, & C, Regina, Saskatchewan

Monday, March 7, 2016

7:00 to 9:30 p.m.





THE RMs HAVE SPOKEN

AS the voice of rural Saskatchewan, we have highlighted some of the key items which are integral to the future of our rural communities. Our goal is to have the successful provincial candidates share our views on the below issues and make a commitment to a sustainable and strong Saskatchewan.

REVENUE SHARING

Saskatchewan municipalities face rising costs each year and are expected to maintain the services that they provide. This proves to be a challenge as municipalities have a limited tax base and limited revenue streams. Supporting resource development by maintaining key infrastructure, such as roads and bridges used by industry, while still providing services to ratepayers can be a cause of financial strain. Municipal revenue sharing has been a consistent funding source that we rely upon to provide some much needed financial relief.

We urge the provincial government to retain the current PST funding model for municipal revenue sharing in the 2016 Provincial Budget.

PROVINCIAL RAT ERADICATION PROGRAM (PREP)

SARM is thankful for the \$1.4 million in funding given by the Government of Saskatchewan in the 2015-16 program year. PREP has been an effective and efficient program for the eradication of rats since its inception in 2010.

The funding for PREP will be used to continue building on the impressive progress that has been achieved. PREP will continue to accomplish its goals by improving RM participation, rate-payer education and communications, Pest Control Officer education, training and public awareness campaigns. This will provide a 50/50 provincial/municipal cost share and help eradicate rats in Saskatchewan.

We request the funding provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and *Growing Forward 2* be increased to \$1.5 million in 2016.

We also request that the funding be provided for a two-year period. This will encourage other RMs to participate as they will have the peace of mind knowing that they will have a two-year funding commitment for rat control.

PUBLIC-INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (PIPP)

Many of the province's industries are reliant on the municipal road network to transport their products to the market and for transporting heavy machinery and equipment. However, our roads were not built with these industries in mind. A negative externality created by the increased traffic on municipal road results in a rapid deterioration of the road infrastructure. The RMs have the responsibility to maintain the road infrastructure and/or upgrade the roads to a standard that is suitable for supporting industry traffic.

We ask that the province assist us in establishing a multi-year funding program for rural based natural resource road infrastructure projects.

We ask that the province allocate \$40 million in funding to the new Public-Industry Partnership Program.

We also ask that 10 per cent of the remaining 90 per cent of the Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure Component (PTIC) be allocated by the province as the federal contribution to develop PIPP.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND

The establishment of an emergency response fund will give fire departments the resources they need to continue providing the essential services that they

deliver without risk of non-payment. Unpaid bills cannot continue. The emergency response fund would help eliminate many of these issues. Furthermore, any surplus funds at the end of each year could be used to build local capacity to respond to emergencies.

We request steps be taken to establish an emergency response fund. This fund would be accessible by local fire departments to recoup costs from providing fire services, allowing them to operate more efficiently and effectively.

MUNICIPAL ROADS FOR THE ECONOMY (MREP)

We have been receiving funding from the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure to deliver MREP since 2009. The purpose of MREP is to provide funding to RMs to assist with the costs of maintaining roads and infrastructure impacted by heavy traffic use by industry. This program provides annual funding assistance to RMs through Clearing the Path (CTP) Corridor Incremental Maintenance, Heavy High Volume Road and CTP Construction Projects and Municipal Bridge Services.

The funding for MREP has seen continuous decreases, and it continues to be funded on an annual basis. IF MREP were to receive a two-year funding commitment, then RMs that qualify would have adequate time to acquire any necessary permits and undertake engineering work well in advance of the start of the short road construction season.

We ask that MREP funding be restored to 2013-14 levels and include a two-year funding commitment. This will ensure that RMs continue to maintain and construct primary weight haul routes and maintain bridges and culverts that are essential to the economy.

Photo credit: Heather Kindermann



RETIREMENT:

one word – many different views

BY SHEILA KEISIG RMAA DIRECTOR DIVISION 1,
ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE RM OF TULLYMET, NO. 216

ONE may spontaneously break out in a happy dance at the thought of this lifetime goal. *Finally, more time to travel, more visits with family, and in general – freedom!* I like to think this will be me in ten years, or possibly 20 years...who am I kidding? More like 30 years! However, to some administrators, the thought of the “R” word brings anxiety. Most likely because of their loyalty to their RM and not wanting to leave the current council with no one in place to take over. They have poured their heart and soul into their profession for years and cannot fathom not being the administrator.

We are all aware of the potential shortage for administrators in the upcoming years. From previous surveys the RMAA has undertaken, the statistics are around 50 per cent retirements happening within the next five to eight years. This is a common theme in every aspect of workplaces across the country.

I have been fortunate to sit on the RMAA Recruitment and Retention Committee this year and have witnessed many success stories for RM's all over the province. This has been largely attributed to SARM's Municipal Administrator Internship Program (MAIP). MAIP allows potential administrators to be “paired” up with an RM. This has proven beneficial to all involved. Council has a perfect succession plan in place where a new administrator can begin working and pick up where the retiring administrator left off. The administrator, who has been thinking of retirement but still has loyalty to the RM and not wanting to leave without someone in place, now has the chance to train someone to take over. The potential administrator gains knowledge and hands-on training, while fulfilling the requirements of obtaining a “C” certificate.

RMAA Board Members attended four career fairs this past fall held in various places across the province. I attended one and was very impressed with the high school students inquiring about the program. I would say over three-quarters that I spoke to came from a rural background. Most of them know their RM's administrator by name, and understand how council is formed and how decision making is achieved. This is promising, as we prepare for the next ten years of retirements.

I truly value the administrators that are still working in offices after 25 plus years. They are a wealth of knowledge, and I enjoy hearing their views on current municipal issues. They have seen a lot of changes throughout their career and are a huge asset to newcomers. They willingly assist other administrators with any problems or issues they may have, and they speak passionately about their work every time I talk to them.

From what I have observed in my short time as an administrator, I see an underlying quality that a huge majority of us possess – loyalty. We are a unique group of individuals who strive to do the best for our communities. This is what we work for every day when we arrive at the office. This is the reason I enjoy networking with administrators. We're like-minded, conscientious and organized, and our thought processes are usually running in the same path. The best brainstorming recipe ever!

In closing, I want to reiterate that I am only expressing my views on retirement and recruitment. I am not by any means suggesting you hand in your notice and keys and catch the next flight to Cancun!



- SAMA has completed and implemented phase one of our multi-phase Technology Infrastructure (TI) Program, which saw upgrades to the interface of SAMA's internal computer system. The resulting efficiency gains are expected to improve our ability to complete maintenance in a more timely fashion for 2016, and begin to increase our capacity to conduct property reinspections going forward. For more information on the TI Program, please visit SAMA's website at www.sama.sk.ca.
- SAMA conducts revaluations based on a four-year cycle. 2013 was the year of the last revaluation, and in 2017 assessed values will be updated to reflect a new base date of January 1, 2015. The Agency recognizes that all parties should be provided with as much time as possible to examine the assessment shifts and make tax policy decisions prior to 2017. SAMA plans to ensure that preliminary values are communicated to Government Relations on or before April 1, 2016, and to our client municipalities by July 1, 2016.
- SAMA is continually working to improve our customer service. Part of our ongoing efforts to prioritize maintenance work is to establish service charters with municipalities that detail their individual delivery needs. Contact your local SAMA office for more details or to discuss setting up a maintenance service charter.
- For more information on SAMA or Saskatchewan's assessment system, or to view individual property assessments on SAMAView, please visit our website at www.sama.sk.ca.

Contact SAMA by phone at: 1-800-667-7262,
or by email: info.request@sama.sk.ca.



What do wetlands mean to you and your family?

Wetland conservation is vital for the well-being of all Saskatchewan families. Ask your local candidates what they will do to protect Saskatchewan's remaining wetlands.

Visit **voteforwetlands.ca**

A few minutes of your time could make a world of difference.



Ducks Unlimited Canada



The significance of **MREP IN RURAL SK**

BY TERRY HOEVING

SARM PROGRAM MANAGER - INFRASTRUCTURE



DID you know that Saskatchewan has the largest municipal road system in Canada?

Rural Saskatchewan has a vast network of over 162,000 km of municipal roads. Having Canada's largest municipal road system comes with its advantages and disadvantages. The Municipal Roads to the Economy Program (MREP) helps RMs with some of the costs of maintaining and upgrading existing Clearing the Path (CTP) Corridors, Heavy Haul

High Volume (HHHV) roads, repairing or replacing bridges/culverts and 6,660.9 km of CTP Primary Weight Corridors receiving maintenance grant funding.

Even with MREP, the province continues to struggle with maintaining infrastructure to a level of service suitable for industry's needs. The last number of years have seen rural Saskatchewan explode in resource-based industries, including oil, gas, uranium, potash, agriculture commodities, forestry and more.

Although there has been a recent slowdown in these industries, Saskatchewan is supporting a wealth of other industries such as grain, cattle and other agriculture commodities that are the primary drivers behind this growth.

This significant increase in economic growth in rural Saskatchewan has placed additional pressures on RMs to maintain and construct infrastructure to a standard that supports this unprecedented economic growth in the province.

Although some industry activity has slowed, huge trucks still roll down municipal infrastructure taking their toll on the service level. Our rural road infrastructure has not caught up to the economic development Saskatchewan has experienced in the last few years. Bigger, better and faster with larger loads than ever. Instead of a one ton grain truck, farmers now have one or two semis either contracted or rented to move grain.

RMs have been very innovative in their MREP applications. There are dollars to be saved and mutual benefits to be gained if RMs take a regional municipal approach. Examples include tendering MREP projects together to leverage better rates or grouping together to designate a continuous CTP corridor route. RMs have also had success approaching the industries that use the municipal infrastructure to contribute either to the maintenance or upgrades of roads to enable a level of service suitable for them.

There are advantages of a vast municipal road network. With MREP's CTP Primary Weight Corridor there are options available to industry to effectively move their goods through the province and keep heavy traffic off of the provincial system, such as the thin membrane surface (TMS) roads that are at the end of their service life.

With the development of the MREP, RMs are able to move forward in a timely manner with larger construction projects and innovative maintenance practices in response to the rapid development of the province.

MREP is making a difference for RMs by funding municipal infrastructure projects around the province. SARM is proud to manage MREP for the RMs on behalf of the provincial government, while contributing to the goals and objectives of the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth: Investing in Infrastructure and Planning for Growth through MREP*.

SARM looks forward to continued successes with MREP by working with the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure and developing new and innovative ways of presenting this well received program.

SARM has been receiving funding from the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure to deliver MREP since 2009. The funding for MREP has seen continuous decreases and it continues to be funded on an annual basis. If MREP were to receive a two-year funding commitment, then RMs that qualify would have adequate time to acquire any necessary permits and undertake engineering work well in advance of the start of the short road construction season.

SARM asks the provincial government to restore MREP funding to 2013-14 levels and include a two-year funding commitment to ensure that RMs can continue to maintain and construct primary weight haul routes and maintain bridges and culverts that are essential to the economy's growth and development.



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GOT GRAVEL?

BY MICHAEL POSCENTE
PRESIDENT, CPP ENVIRONMENTAL

WHAT is it that makes gravel so important? Why are so many Canadian municipal governments fretting over gravel supplies? Spoiler alert! It's because of diminishing supply (or access to) natural gravel sources and an ever increasing demand for gravel.

Studies by Natural Resources Canada indicate that construction aggregate use is 43% for public works and 57% for private use. Public uses include those of highways, roads, transit, water and sewer, hospitals and schools, while private uses include residential and commercial buildings, private roads, railroads, etc. This equates to competition for aggregate between provincial governments, urban municipalities, RMs and the private sector.

When governments are developing aggregate allocation policies, preparing land use plans or establishing bylaws for permitting gravel operations, it is important to maintain fair and equitable policies, procedures and practices. There must be a balance between public and private sector interests, as they depend upon each other for building and maintaining our community infrastructure.

Annual per capita consumption of aggregate in Canada ranges between 10 and 15 tons. Canada's per capita aggregate use exceeds that of the US, most likely because of our extensive road infrastructure and smaller population. As our population grows, our future aggregate consumption will increase. Provincial and municipal governments and the private sector need to address their respective aggregate needs well into the future. Consideration must be given to responsible use of natural gravel deposits, development of alternate aggregate sources, transportation infrastructure required to move gravel to areas of low supply and conservation of gravel resources.

Securing long-term strategic gravel supplies is important for Saskatchewan's RMs as 60% of the aggregate usage in Canada is for road bed construction and surfacing. Saskatchewan's highway and municipal road networks constitute the largest rural road system in Canada, totaling over 190,000 km, of which approximately 26,250 km are provincial highways. This equates to RMs maintaining approximately 163,750 km of rural roads; important for linking small rural communities, providing access to residences, farmland, industrial sites and other properties.

As part of SARM's "Got Gravel?" project, a survey of Saskatchewan RMs was conducted to understand the current state of gravel reserves and challenges encountered in acquiring new gravel reserves. Of the 296 RMs in the province, 219 responded to the survey, a 74% response rate. As such, one must exercise discretion in interpreting the results of the individual survey questions against the response rate if interpolating results across

all the RMs. The following is a sample of the survey results, along with discussion from the author's perspective of what they mean. A key component in defining future gravel needs is understanding the current state of RM gravel reserves.

Does your RM have a strategic gravel supply reserve to fulfill future road construction and maintenance needs?

| Response | Percentage | Count |
|----------|------------|-------|
| Yes | 53.9% | 118 |
| No | 46.1% | 101 |
| Total | | 219 |

The good news is that just over half of the RM respondents have what they consider a strategic gravel reserve. The problem is that of those 118 RMs indicating they have a strategic gravel reserve, for 51 respondents, the supply term is less than 10 years. RMs should be examining their annual operating requirements and capital development plans and forecasting out at least 25 years for determining a minimum strategic supply of aggregate.

An important output of the survey is that 28 of the 118 RMs responding do not have an accurate volume estimate of their existing gravel reserves. A common response was that the quality of gravel is often an issue and quantity and quality within a pit can vary substantially. It is important for RMs to invest in some basic exploration within their existing pit boundaries to determine volume estimates and obtain knowledge of the quality and suitability of their gravel reserves. This type of information enables RMs to have confidence they can supply their future needs or trigger a search for additional reserves.

Roughly how many years of gravel reserves does your RM have available?

| Response | Percentage | Count |
|---|------------|-------|
| Up to 5 years | 20.2% | 23 |
| Up to 10 years | 23.5% | 28 |
| Up to 15 years | 11.8% | 14 |
| Up to 20+ years | 21.0% | 25 |
| Unsure, we do not have an accurate volume inventory | 23.5% | 28 |
| Total | | 118 |

Geographically, gravel deposits vary in abundance. RMs can be in a 'have' or 'have not' situation depending on where they reside in the province. The good news is that 130 of the 219 RMs responding indicated that local gravel supplies were either

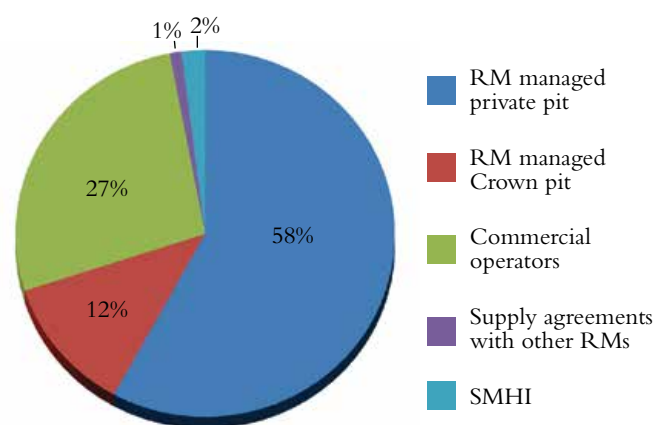
moderately or very abundant. This indicates that there is potential to consider transport of gravel within Saskatchewan to areas of low supply. Transport costs will be critical to determine economic viability. Infrastructure will also be required, for example if transporting by railway and sidings and storage yards will also be required. Regional land use planning should consider these requirements in areas of the province where gravel may need to be brought in to accommodate future demand.

How abundant is the gravel supply within your RM boundary?

| Response | Percentage | Count |
|---|------------|-------|
| Very abundant (supply exceeds local demands) | 14.6% | 32 |
| Moderately abundant (supply capable of meeting local demands) | 44.7% | 98 |
| Low abundance (supply does not meet local demand - gravel is commonly imported) | 38.4% | 84 |
| I don't know | 2.3% | 5 |
| Total | | 219 |

Sources and supply options must be considered by RMs. Of the RM respondents, 58% sourced some of their gravel from private land pits. The second highest source at 27% was from commercial gravel suppliers and the third most important source at 12% was pits located on Crown land. Very little gravel is sourced from Saskatchewan Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure or through supply agreements with other RMs. As mentioned earlier, commercial sand and gravel suppliers play a key role in RM gravel supply. When developing strategies for long-term gravel supply, it is wise for RMs to include a variety of sand and gravel sources. The largest cost to getting gravel to a site is hauling. Having a variety of gravel sources may enable RMs to hedge future costs by considering options on a project specific basis, for example taking advantage of the closest gravel supply to reduce haul costs (assuming the quality is suitable).

What percentage of gravel comes from the following sources?



In Saskatchewan, the owner of the land owns the gravel rights. On private land, a municipality must either own the land or establish an agreement with the landowner to use the gravel. On Crown land, the province owns the rights to the gravel and priority use is first for provincial public works (e.g. Highways and Infrastructure) and second for municipal public works.

Municipalities can acquire the rights to gravel on Crown land through a lease with the provincial government.

Whether on private or Crown land, developing gravel sources is becoming ever more challenging because of social, environmental and economic considerations. RMs undergoing population growth will often see an increase in rural subdivision developments and will be challenged with the 'not in my backyard' response to gravel pit developments. There is also a risk of approving subdivisions and other developments over top of gravel deposits, sterilizing its use. In areas of gravel development, RMs may need to manage an increase in resident complaints because of noise, dust, worsened road conditions from truck traffic and disrupted surface drainage. Environmental considerations are escalating with concerns over water quality, wildlife habitat, endangered species and cumulative effects. Economically, on private land gravel sources, RMs may find that land owners are demanding higher fees for extracting gravel from their land and are less willing to enter into long-term agreements because of the escalation of demand. Challenges of gravel pit development are likely to increase over time, suggesting an urgency to acquire strategic gravel reserves, supply agreements and long-term contracts sooner than later.

RMs commented frequently on not having adequate resources to properly explore for and acquire gravel reserves. Often the exploration is conducted by the RM Council, without access to professionals. In other cases, RMs hired consultants to scout and explore, only to suffer disappointment when positive results were not forthcoming. Gravel exploration comes at a cost, sometimes paying off but often not realizing results. It was a surprise to observe in the survey results that the majority, 194 of the 219 RMs respondents, did not collaborate with adjacent RMs to acquire and manage gravel reserves. Of the RMs indicating they do not partner with adjacent RMs, reasons included: already having sufficient gravel supplies and not feeling they had to collaborate (34%), not being in a position to share gravel due to limited supplies (23%), never been a consideration previously (20%), obtaining from commercial operators (15%), and other reasons (8%).

Does your RM partner with surrounding municipalities to share gravel resources (e.g. sharing a common gravel pit, cost-sharing operations such as crushing, sharing equipment)?

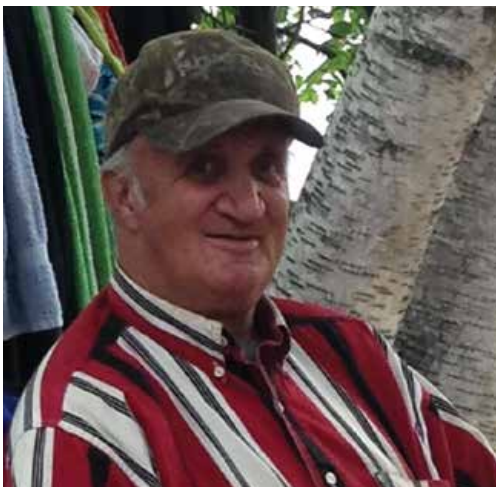
| Response | Percentage | Count |
|----------|------------|-------|
| Yes | 11.4% | 25 |
| No | 88.6% | 194 |
| Total | | 219 |

In conclusion, there is a need for RMs to include long-term gravel reserves into their strategic plans. There is also a need to consider future gravel supply on a regional scale with at least a 25-year outlook. Consideration of provincial economic growth estimates and capital plans is important to confidently address long-term gravel supply strategies. The Saskatchewan Government, Urban Municipalities and Rural Municipalities should all collaborate on long-term gravel supply needs for public works. Their current relationships, from the perspective of the author, are more akin to competitors, even though all parties are responsible to represent the best interests for Saskatchewan residents.



A community well **SUCCESS STORY**

BY BEN CHURSINOFF SARM SENIOR POLICY ANALYST



THE R.M. OF FRENCHMAN BUTTE #501
DEDICATES THIS COMMUNITY WELL
IN MEMORY OF COUNCILLOR
GEORGE PETCH
COUNCILLOR FOR
DIVISION 1 JAN. 2003 – NOV. 2008
DIVISION 2 NOV. 2009 – NOV. 16, 2014

THE RM of Frenchman Butte No. 501 passed a motion in December 2010 to apply for the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program (FRWIP) to construct a second well near the town of St. Walburg to meet the RM's needs.

FRWIP is part of the *Growing Forward 2* program. It is designed to support the development of water supplies in Saskatchewan by providing a cost sharing grant to cover up to two-thirds of approved eligible costs for municipalities. The maximum grant level is \$150,000 per applicant.

This program benefits irrigated acres and the livestock industry, encourages rural economic activity, mitigates the impacts of drought, and the water is usable by fire departments. FRWIP's four categories are: on farm, agricultural business development, community well and irrigation district.

Community wells are particularly important to the agriculture industry. They provide a convenient way for producers to acquire non-potable water that can be used for spraying, watering cattle and

other farm uses, ensuring that a RM's agricultural producers' needs are met.

FRWIP provided much needed funding to the RM of Frenchman Butte for their expensive community well project. FRWIP's community well component is geared towards the development of wells for sustainable, non-potable water supplies; which is exactly what the RM of Frenchman Butte needed.

Eligible projects include small and large diameter wells in conjunction with a tank loading facility, increasing storage capacity at existing loading facilities to reduce loading times, protect existing wells and decommission older wells.

Although the process began in 2010, the RM of Frenchman Butte's well wasn't finished until 2014. One can imagine that the RM faced several challenges over those four years. When a project takes that long to complete, it would be easy to abandon for a simpler task with more immediate benefits and results. Fortunately, the RM of Frenchman Butte had a project champion who ensured that it kept moving forward.

RM Councillor George Petch was this project's champion. George was born on January 16, 1945 in North Battleford. He gained a wealth of experience and knowledge throughout his lifetime in a variety of employment and business opportunities. During his time with the RM of Frenchman Butte, he helped lead many projects, and he was particularly proud of the community well projects. In fact, the St. Walburg community well is dedicated in memory of George, who passed away on November 16, 2014.

The RM of Frenchman Butte is a community well success story that would not have been possible without FRWIP or the efforts of George Petch. Sharing this success story is important to the RM because it demonstrates the effectiveness of FRWIP, the benefits it brings to communities and acknowledges the tremendous work that George put into his community, specifically in relation to the well projects.

For details on FRWIP, visit the the Ministry of Agriculture's website, www.agriculture.gov.sk.ca/GrowingForward2.



Planning for **HAZARDOUS LANDS**

BY HEATHER KINDERMANN
SARM COMMUNITY PLANNER

HAZARDOUS LANDS

RMS contain large and diverse lands that may range from level fields to valleys, forests and marshes. Some of these areas may be prone to slumping, landslides, erosion, flooding or forest fires, which are considered hazardous for development. The Statements of Provincial Interest Regulations (SPIs) provide guidance, as well as specific provisions, to be included in Official Community Plans (OCPs) for identifying and planning hazardous areas. It's important that RMs provide policies for these areas in order to achieve a framework for responsible and sustainable planning and development. It is a municipality's responsibility to apply and follow the SPIs.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

It's important for RMs to identify and plan responsibly for hazardous land areas. It's easier to plan developments away from flood prone areas rather than dealing with the costs of updating drainage infrastructure due to past oversights. RMs always want what's best for their residents, so it's important to ensure that developments are safe for residents both now and in the future. The best strategy for responsible planning is to prevent future developments from locating in hazardous areas, but since many locations already exist on hazardous lands, RMs can take preventative measures through land use planning and engineering reports to find solutions to mitigate potential impacts.

OCP AND HAZARDOUS LANDS

OCPs contain policies for future RM developments. While all OCPs must follow the SPIs, RMs can also include additional goals and policies regarding development on or near potential hazardous areas. Part of the planning process is acquiring information on potentially hazardous lands in your RM. This may mean creating maps that allow council to review all development proposals critically. Maps included in an OCP can display areas of flooding, slumping, erosion, soil type, and forest composition, to name a few. Potential hazardous land information is not only an important tool for council to make informed decisions, but it's also a great tool for potential developers.

PLANNING IS GOOD FOR DEVELOPMENT

Policies and maps in the OCP allow for RMs to be consistent and market their available lands for development. When potential developers are interested in development, it is beneficial for the RM to know the limitations

of certain areas. This enables RMs to let developers know that developing in certain areas will require more time, review and likely capital costs. RMs must also keep in mind that once the development is completed, the RM will be responsible for the maintenance of the newly built infrastructure. This means all future problems will be up to the RM to solve. It is important that RMs make planning decisions that mitigate the potential for harm from natural hazards and adopt policies that will safeguard residents. These policies will benefit the RM, developers and all current and future residents of your community.

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NEW FACES AT SARM



**LIBBEY MORIN -
POLICY ANALYST**

Libbey was born and raised in Regina, SK. She completed a Bachelor of Arts Honours, while studying Political Science at the University of Regina. Previously, she has worked for the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association and the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce. Libbey joined the SARM policy team as a Policy Analyst on October 26, 2015 and is very excited to be a part of the SARM team and work with municipalities again.



**KATHLEEN ISRAEL -
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

Kathleen was born and raised in Regina, SK and her family is from the Philippines. She completed the Office Education Program at SIAST in 2010 and has worked in various administrative capacities including with the Ministry of Social Services, the Regina Hotel Association and has worked for two very respectable ophthalmologists. Every year she volunteers as a dance coordinator during Mosaic with the Maharlika Dance Group of Regina. She enjoys learning about other cultures, travelling, dancing, music, playing sports and exercising. Kathleen joined SARM on November 30, 2015 and is very excited to be a part of the team.

SARM's Annual Convention is just around the corner, visit www.sarm.ca for more information.



Saskatchewan Association
of Rural Municipalities



The Effective RURAL COUNCIL

BY GEORGE B. CUFF FCMC

I have written extensively on matters related to elected and appointed officials. I have rarely written on the roles of a rural municipal council. This article is my effort to correct that oversight. While there are generic descriptions in terms of what a council does, the basis of any council's power and authority is laid out in *The Municipalities Act*. This complex piece of legislation provides direction and advice on the roles of a council and the obligations imposed on it.

Responsible and Accountable

Section 3 describes municipalities as "A responsible and accountable level of government within their jurisdiction." It adds that municipalities are subject to the restrictions imposed by provincial laws. Reading between the lines, each council is responsible for all acts and decisions taken by it or its employees providing such actions are within the legal jurisdiction of the *Act* and are not illegal.

This does not leave room for cherry-picking decisions: that is, "I'll be accountable for this decision but not that, for this action by our administration but not the one that is being questioned." Council is responsible for doing certain things; for passing certain types of bylaws; for regulating certain actions; for imposing service costs on its taxpayers; for making policy decisions that impact a lot of people. A council is also accountable for the results of its actions and decisions.

Regardless of what else is in the *Act*, this first section is all that is required to fire a collective shot across a council's bow. Councils cannot treat any matter frivolously; these are weighty matters that cause some degree of grief if council and its administration are not separate but complementary parts of the same choir.

In the event this does not provide sufficient clarity in terms of purpose, the

Act (Section 3) positions itself as legislation that establishes the legal framework wherein municipalities are governed. Councils are to govern "And make decisions which they consider appropriate and in the best interests of their residents." The *Act* says that it will provide municipalities with the power to do that as well as some degree of flexibility in terms of how they "Respond to the existing and future needs of their residents." The *Act* then reiterates that "Municipalities are accountable to the people who elect them and are responsible for encouraging and enabling public participation in the governance process."

To underline the obvious, the legislators make clear several key and lasting objectives:

- Council is responsible;
- Council is accountable;
- Decisions are to be made in the best interests of all residents;
- Councils have some flexibility in terms of how they achieve this; and
- Councils are accountable to the people for acting on its responsibilities and for seeking public input in the governance process.

Purpose

The *Act* also spells out a municipality's purposes. These are listed in Section 4 as:

- "To provide good government;
- To provide services, facilities and other things that, in the opinion of council, are necessary and desirable for all or a part of the municipality;
- To develop and maintain a safe and viable community;
- To foster economic, social and environmental well-being; and
- To provide wise stewardship of public assets."

This delegates significant roles to councils. What it does not spell out is how one should tackle these objectives. That is left to each council (with the advice of its administration) to determine. While each council has obligations and objectives to uphold, how you do so is up to you. That is, in one municipality it may make sense to enter into a partnership with a neighbouring municipality to provide security/safety of services. In another, providing for bylaw enforcement officers may be needed, but the only way to afford it is through grants or kind neighbours. Or a council may enter into a regional economic development (or social services) partnership only to later discover that politically having your own is more acceptable (at least for now).

Councils will discuss what risk management framework has been established and may wish to seek outside counsel before proceeding. Others may question the security of their own public works and ask administration to describe how they have accounted for this function.

A council leads but seeks the advice of its administration before proceeding. Council members ask: "What do we do for the provision of this or that service?" The answer will be based on the policy guidance of this or a previous council. That decision will hopefully be based on thoughtful consideration of the administrator's inquiry, which means it will not happen as soon as the question is raised.

Summary

This focus on purpose may seem overstretched to some, but it's not. In the vernacular, "There are major categories of duties for a municipality; council is the ultimate decision-maker with regard to these issues; council is both responsible and accountable; you get to make decisions; you are wise if you seek advice.

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ACCORDING to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 70 per cent of business owners are looking to transition. This will have a devastating effect on our main streets and hit rural communities the hardest. With fewer family transitions, farms and businesses have to look to a third party to sell. This transition can take two to seven years, and selling a business must be confidential to maintain client and employee morale.

"Five years ago I was working in economic development, and I had a client that was looking to retire and sell their plumbing business. The problem with this industry is when you put up a for sale sign, your suppliers and customers get nervous. Your suppliers start asking for cash on delivery which screws up your cash flow, and your customers do not want to buy a water heater from someone who won't be around to service the warranty in five years. I looked into options for my client to list their business: online posting boards, brokers and classified ads. None of these options gave them the privacy they needed to sell their business in a cost effective manner. That is when I started my company, SuccessionMatching.com," said Alison Anderson, CEO.

SuccessionMatching.com is an online platform that lets business and farm owners find buyers and buyers find successful businesses. We provide a private and secure venue to share information and communicate. We improve the process by using proprietary matching algorithms to allow both parties to find the best possible match based on their skills, capabilities, needs and goals.

Sellers value the privacy because it means their selling process remains between them and the buyers. Buyers value the compatibility matching because it means they are more likely to find a business that suits their particular personality and skill set. If sellers don't get the privacy they want, they run the risk of losing the trust and goodwill of their suppliers and customers. If buyers don't get the compatibility matching, they run the risk of finding out in the due diligence stage that the business isn't a good fit. In both the seller and buyer situation, not using SuccessionMatching.com costs them money, which means the value proposition is based on efficiency and cost savings.

SXNM has established key partnerships with different organizations such as

Community Futures Saskatchewan. Under this partnership, Community Futures has sponsored membership coupons for business owners in Saskatchewan to have free access to the site.

Signing up is simple. Our site can be accessed from the privacy of your own home or office. By logging onto our website, businesses can fill out a profile and pay a small monthly membership fee. Unlike the competition, we do not charge a commission on the sale of the farm or business. Based on a five star rating, the matching algorithm software can suggest individuals that have the skill sets and goals for a business transition.

To receive your free coupon code, visit your local Community Futures Saskatchewan office: <http://cfsask.ca/contact/find-your-regional-office>.

Members with access to the site are free to search for matches and message buyers (or sellers). An Economic Development Officer will review your profile, make suggestions on improvements and answer any questions you may have.

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AGRICULTURE HEALTH AND SAFETY



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ily farm safety package to take home. If you're interested in hosting a Network Discovery Day in your community or want more information, contact us at 306-966-6647 or email blm118@mail.usask.ca.

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This program is funded through Environmental Handling Fees that are applicable to new electronic products sold in the province.





PLANT MANAGEMENT

BY HARVEY ANDERSON

SARM INVASIVE ALIEN PLANTS GROUP PLANNING ADVISOR

WHY are RM councils not taking advantage of SARM's Plant Control Program? Is it a lack of funding need?; are RMs rich?; are there no invasive weeds out there?; or is it the belief that weed control isn't a RM council responsibility? Roads, yes, health issues, yes, fire control, yes, but weed control, no? Weeds can impact the livelihood of ratepayers and limit the productivity of their property, so it should be a council concern.

In 2015, only about 60 per cent of our RMs appointed a weed inspector, and only 25 per cent applied for this funding. Only 30-35 per cent of the total funding was paid to RMs in each of the last three years of this program. The total funds which have been available to RMs is \$800,000 per year, for the last three years. In 2015, only about \$350,000 was rebated to RMs. That means \$500,000 was put back into government coffers to be spent on other things.

I have spent the last 40 years working on agriculture related programs in Saskatchewan, travelled over the backroads through all of the 296 RMs, and have seen the weed issues out there. I do not remember a single RM that does not have some kind of weed problem, within its boundaries. Why aren't these weeds being managed? Many of these invasive weeds spread along RM managed roadways and onto private land, and no one is concerned? Is it that councils do not have budgets for weed management? This SARM Plant Control Program was initiated to help fund weed control. SARM manages a funding program to assist RMs through a rebate program which covers the cost of herbicides used to control many of these invasive weeds.

The weeds covered under this program was limited by the number of weed species it covered for the first

couple of years, but the species list was expanded in 2015 to cover more species. It now covers: Leafy Spurge, Russian Knapweed, Common Tansy, Yellow Toadflax, Absinthe Wormwood, Field Bindweed, Common Burdock, Bladder Campion, Oxeye Daisy, Black Henbane, Hoary Cress, and Wild Parsnip. All the Prohibited Weeds as listed in *The Weed Control Act* are also covered, as well as other costs such as scouting for more locations of the Prohibited Weed that was discovered. Few of the Prohibited weeds are presently in Saskatchewan, but there are localized populations of Salt Cedar and Field Scabious in a few locations.

I am also concerned about the Prohibited Weeds located just outside Saskatchewan's boundaries: Red Bartsia in southwestern Manitoba and Yellow Toadflax in North Dakota and Montana. I expect these weeds to be transported to Saskatchewan over the next few years, and it would be a great plan to eradicate the first few plants, which would likely save RMs thousands of dollars before these species reappear in the province.

The approved herbicides that are covered for funding rebates must have registrations, as listed on the product labels that claim they control these weeds. This may mean that different herbicides may be required for different weeds. No single herbicide will have all of these weeds on their labels, and a claim of suppression is not sufficient to be funded. A plan to spray all weeds with glyphosate (Roundup) will not be funded under this program as this product does not provide real control of the target weeds and has detrimental effects, such as removing competitive grasses.

One concern, has been that the paperwork required is too much, taking up too much time. Considering that a Licensed

Pesticide Applicator must keep accurate records of spraying activities by law, the only extra effort required is for this information to be organized in a useable form. The applications have been streamlined, and in 2015 there was a computerized interactive spreadsheet application form which could be used by computer savvy administrators who make the final application for the funding.

The details of this funding program are available on SARM's website, and the 2016 application form and updates should be available long before spraying season, but major changes to this program are unlikely.

A RM becomes eligible for funding by appointing a weed inspector, creating a written Weed Management Plan, and by spraying approved herbicides to control one of the designated weeds. The herbicides must be applied by a Licensed Pesticide Applicator on public lands, such as roadsides, but private land can be sprayed by the landowners.

The best plan for finding a Weed Inspector and Licensed Pesticide Applicator is for the RM to find a reliable person and have them trained. Saskatchewan Polytechnic provides courses for Pesticide Applicators, and the Ministry of Agriculture holds Weed Inspector Training Clinics annually in mid-April.

As Weed Advisor for SARM's Invasive Plant Management Program, I am available at no cost to RMs to help them create weed management plans, form co-operative weed management areas with neighboring RMs, urban municipalities or First Nations, review funding applications and general Invasive Weed advice.

For more information, contact Harvey Anderson at 306-933-7695 or harvey.anderson@gov.sk.ca.

rural councillor **MEMBER NEWS**



**RM OF VAL MARIE NO. 17
IN MEMORIAM
KENNETH CARLETON**

Kenneth Andrew Carleton of Swift Current, formerly of Orkney, SK, passed away on October 14, 2015 at the age of 92. He was born in Cadillac in 1923 to Clayton and Lillian Carleton. He was the eldest of five children. He leaves behind his wife of 70 years, Jean, and his three children, Russel (Shirley), Carol (Perry), Larry (Bonnie), and their families.

At 17, Ken bought land near Orkney and began farming. He was passionate and proud to have his family farm alongside him. In the 90's he retired to Swift Current but often returned to the farm to lend a hand. He was a Masonic Lodge member, worked tirelessly for the Swift Current Abilities Council; manned the Salvation Army's kettles; picked garbage from the city ditches; sold and delivered apples for the Kiwanis Club; held positions on his condo board and the Val Marie and Swift Current Library Board.

Ken was a political man. He served on the Local Improvement District from 1953 to 1968. He was then Reeve for the RM of Val Marie from 1969 to 1992. In total, he was actively involved in local government for 40 years.

Ken was a true gentleman. A loving husband, father, grandfather and friend. He was passionate about helping others, and he confidently lived every day of his life with integrity. He was a role model for local leaders, and the RM council proudly remembers his accomplishments.



**RM OF LAURIER NO. 38
IN MEMORIAM
EPHREM NAPOLEON
FRADETTE**

Ephrem Napoleon Fradette, late of Radville, passed away September 22, 2015 at the age of 89 years old. Ephrem married Angela Gilmore on July 27, 1948 and took over the family farm shortly thereafter. Together they raised a family of eleven children. Farming was his passion for over 50 years. He was also the Division 2 Councillor in the RM of Laurier No. 38 from 1982 to 1987. Ephrem is survived by ten of his children, 29 grandchildren and 19 great-grandchildren.



**RM OF FILLMORE NO. 96
IN MEMORIAM
DAVE JENKINS**

David Jenkins was born on the family farm at Colfax. He was predeceased by his parents, Herbert and Rhoda Louise Jenkins, and Frank Jenkins; his brothers, Morgan and John, and sister-in-law, June Jenkins. David is survived by his brother, Tom (Myrna) Jenkins; sister, Margaret (Max) Schaffer; sister-in-law, Evelyn Jenkins, and numerous nieces

and nephews. His career took him to several communities in Saskatchewan where he was an administrator for various rural municipalities. David never forgot his roots and returned to farming prior to his retirement in 1995. His main concern in life was always his family. He was always happy to celebrate weddings, anniversaries, graduations, etc. until his declining health restricted his activities. The family would like to thank Lumdsen Heritage Home Staff for their superb care and compassion shown to David during his stay.



**RM OF FILLMORE NO. 96
IN MEMORIAM
RAY KELLEY**

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our father, Raymond Leroy Kelley, on August 20, 2015. Ray was predeceased by his parents, Frank and Hazel Kelley. He is remembered by his children, Colleen Kelley (Edmond Helstab) of Ottawa and their children, Justine, Morgan, Joseph and Lauren; Jim (Deanna) of Saskatoon and children, Marisa and Mason; Jeff (Trina) of Red Deer and children, Olivia, Megan and Hannah. He is also survived by his sisters, Shirley (Clarence) Dorsch of Calgary, Joan (Wayne) Gent of Red Deer, and Linda (Carman) McLeod of Weyburn, as well as by several nieces and nephews.

He was born at the family farm near Talmage, SK in 1936. In 1962, he married Sandra Riddell. Our family lived on the farm until 1966 and then split our time between the farm and our home in Weyburn. Following a car accident in 1969, he closed his Allis Chalmers

Farm Implement Dealership - Kelley's Farm Supply - and focused on farming full-time. He actively farmed until 2001 when he retired and moved to Weyburn.

Dad loved the land and the farm. He was actively involved in the inception of the Weyburn Inland Terminal, served as a counselor at the RM of Fillmore for over 20 years and enjoyed selling short line farm equipment. He enjoyed many sports and watching the Blue Jays or curling in his spare time. He was a prolific collector and had a tremendous love of animals.



**RM OF TERRELL NO. 101
IN MEMORIAM
GREGORY LUDWAR**

Gregory Ludwar of Spring Valley, SK, passed away on July 4, 2015 at the age of 56. He is predeceased by his son, Christopher and survived by his wife, Janet,

daughter, Amanda (Kerry) Runzer, and grandsons, Kayden, Treyton and Pierce, as well as other family and friends. Greg was born in 1958 in Moose Jaw. He grew up on the family farm east of Spring Valley. He married Janet in September 1976. In 1986, Greg and Janet moved back to Spring Valley to raise their two children.

Greg worked several jobs, including as a welder at the Ormiston Salt Mine. In 1999, the Ormiston Mine shut down, and Greg began working for the RM of Elmsthorpe No. 100, as a grader operator. In 2010, he moved over to the RM of Terrell No. 101 and took the position of grader operator/foreman. He continued in this position until his passing. Greg will be missed by many. The RM of Terrell would like to thank Greg for his years of service and dedication to the municipality.

**RM OF NEWCOMBE NO. 260
IN MEMORIAM
ADAM EHRESMAN**

Adam Ehresman, beloved husband of Cathy, passed away on August 14, 2015 at the age of 82 years. Adam was born in Fox Valley, SK in 1932.

He met Cathy, and they married in 1959, settling in Glidden where they raised their family and farmed for many years. Adam's memory will be forever treasured in the hearts of his six daughters, Patty (Jim) Mazzei, Brenda Ward, Debbie (Doug) Morozowski, Bernadette (Neil) Adams, Liana (Jerry) Pottle and Michelle (Ed) Phipps, and 15 grandchildren: John, Tyler and Martina Mazzei, Jessie and Ali Ward, Makrina and Camille Morozowski, Blake, Austin and Sydney Adams, Lexi and Sean Pottle, and Tom, Abbey and Riley Phipps. Survived by his sister, Bertilla (Bob) Dies, his brothers, George (Cheryl) Ehresman, Ken (Marianne) Ehresman, and Tim (Colette) Ehresman, and numerous nieces and nephews. Predeceased by his sister, Baby Cathy, and his parents, Ferdinand and Eva Ehresman, his brother, Tony Ehresman and his wife Eileen, and his sister Delores Anton and husband David, and his son-in-law David Rudnisky.

He enjoyed fishing, hunting, wood working, travelling and collecting John Deere tractors. Adam loved to play the guitar, sing and dance. He also loved watching his grandchildren participate in all of their activities.

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**RM OF KEYS NO. 303
IN MEMORIAM
JAMES HALLICK**

It is with profound sadness that the family of James Hallick announces his passing on November 15, 2015 at the age of 78 years. Jim was born in Canora, SK, in 1937 to James and Irene Hallick.

Growing up on the family farm, Jim worked alongside his dad. He then attended the University of Saskatchewan, where he received his Teaching Certificate. He married the love of his life, Jo Miles, in 1959. While finishing school, they welcomed their son, Brad. In time, Jim relocated his family and accepted a teaching position at Badgerdale School, where he taught grades one through eight. While there, they were blessed with their daughter, Cindy. Jim and Jo moved back to the family farm where they farmed for several years before relocating to Bellingham, Washington, where Jim worked as a Production Services Supervisor at Intalco Aluminum Refinery.

In 1983, they returned to Saskatchewan to farm with Brad and Val. Jim was involved with the RM of Keys for 26 years and SARM as Director and Vice President for 17 years. As much as he enjoyed these activities, his greatest love was spending time with his family. He still continued to work along with Brad on the farm, a job he dearly loved. Jim enjoyed watching sports, especially curling, football and rodeos. He loved to take part in hunting, fishing and golfing and was an avid reader. Always involved in his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren's lives, Jim made sure they were loved and stayed on track in their endeavours. He was a sounding board and a valued source of knowledge for his family.

He left his family with a rich heritage – one of faith, hope and trust in God. He was dependable, steadfast and hardworking. He will be forever missed and always

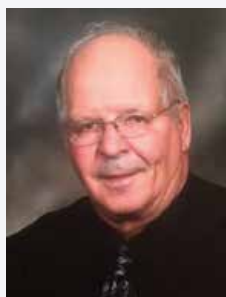
loved. Jim is survived by his wife, Jo; son, Brad (Val); daughter, Cindy (Harvey); grandchildren: Aimee (Ryan), Megan (Robbie), Steven (Bridgette), Michelle (Devon) and Brett; great-grandchildren: Abigail, Emily and Blair Dukes and Madison Gunderson; and his sister, Geraldine (Bill); as well as his nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.



**RM OF LAKEVIEW NO. 337
IN MEMORIAM
STEVEN ZAZULA**

Steven Zazula was born to Peter and Anne (Hankewich) Zazula on August 12, 1929. He received his elementary education at Zazula School and Harrow Public School. He received his high school by correspondence. Steven took up farming as a life-long occupation in the Hendon District. He had a great love of farming.

As a practicing Catholic, Steven became a member of the Descent of the Holy Spirit Parish in Wadena. He served as president of the Parish Council from 1970-1978 and as treasurer from 1982-2012. Steven was an RM of Lakeview No. 337 Councillor for Division 5 from 1966-1977.



**RM OF LAKEVIEW NO. 337
IN MEMORIAM
MARTIN WILLIAM KOROLCHUK**

Martin William Korolchuk was born in April 1937. He passed away suddenly on March 31, 2015 at St. Paul's Hospital in Saskatoon. Martin attended school at MacMahon School and then later moved to attend school in Wadena. He began

farming with his dad at a young age on the family farm by Clair, SK. He later took a mechanics course in Winnipeg. Martin worked the rigs in the winters and farmed for the rest of the seasons.

In July 1970, Martin married the love of his life, Sophie Kopanko. They moved to the family farm outside of Clair where they began their life journey together. To this union three beautiful children were born: Michelle Ann, Bryan Martin and Roxane Lynn. After farming for over half a century, they moved to Quill Lake. After moving to town, they took up golfing, enjoying the Quill Lake golf course as often as they could. Martin served as Councillor for Division 3 from 1980 to 1982 for the RM of Lakeview No. 337.

**RM OF HEARTS HILL NO. 352
IN MEMORIAM
WENDELIN KOHLMAN**

Wendelin Kohlman was born in September 1930 in Kerrobert, SK. He died on September 22, 2015 in Provost, AB five days shy of his 85th birthday. A kind and loving man, Wendelin was the oldest son of Alphonse and Floramina.

He married Zita Heffner and became the father of 15 children, 36 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren. We will remember him for following the path God gave him in the best way he could. He attended St. Thomas College, was a lifelong farmer and an active community member; a sacristan at St. Dontaus Parish for many years, a member of the Knights of Columbus, a school board member for St. Mary's School, and a Hearts Hill Rural Councillor.

Wendelin was an avid reader, historian and volunteer weather record keeper for Environment Canada. He was a social man who enjoyed sports, playing cards and solving puzzles. His hobbies included collecting coins, arrowheads, interesting rocks and metal detecting. He also sponsored an orphan from the Ukraine for many years.

Wendelin was a man of integrity. A dedicated family man, who honoured commitment and instilled in his family the core value system defined who he was. Wendelin and Zita together left their greatest legacy; the principle that "family is the most important thing in the world." He will be dearly missed.

He is survived by his children, Sharon (John) Christens, Robert (Lorna), Gerald (Shelly), Maria (Mitch) Gerrard, Jan (Debbie), Bernard (Pearl), Laurianne (Chris) Molaro, De (Michele), Norbert, Chris (Trina), Terry (Annette), Wendy (Vern) Trenerry, Nick (Tania), Rita (Emanuel) Raposo, and Jennifer (Todd) Miller; grandchildren and great-grandchildren; brothers, Alphonse and Jerome; sisters, Faye, Anne, Kaye, Delores, Lorraine, Helen and Cecilia; and many nieces, nephews and neighbours.



**RM OF BAYNE NO. 371
IN MEMORIAM**

ANTON (TONY) LABRASH

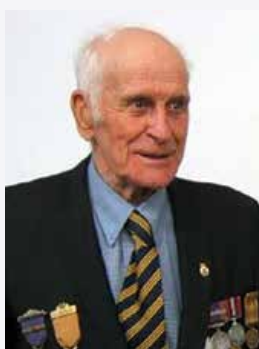
Tony LaBrash of Bruno, SK passed away in September 2015 at 77 years old.

He grew up on the original LaBrash farm along the shores of Muskiki Lake where he developed an enduring passion for the land and the cattle he raised.

On July 6, 1974 Tony married Marjorie Dust, and they had three children. They devoted their lives to each other and the family farm, sharing their love of the land with their children, who to Tony's great pride, have each built their careers in the field of agriculture.

Although farming was in his blood, he was very passionate about serving as Division 5 Councillor for 31 years from 1981-2012.

Tony is survived by his wife, Marjorie, and their three children, Leanne (Hush-ton Block) LaBrash, Kelly (Lisa) LaBrash and Rochelle (Marc) Mansiere, as well as eight beloved grandchildren, Magnus, Kierce, Emma, Lyndon, Seth, Anna, Luc and Maria.



**RM OF HILLSDALE NO. 440
IN MEMORIAM**

JOHN RUSSELL GOODFELLOW

Russell Goodfellow passed away in March 2015 at the age of 92 years old. He is survived by five children, Marilyn (Norman) Lindsay, Glenn (Betty-Anne) Goodfellow, Allan (Sally) Goodfellow, Daryl (Deb) Goodfellow and Wendy (Jack) Worman, 16 grandchildren, 29 great-grandchildren, three sisters and one brother. He was predeceased by his wife, Alice, infant son, Kenneth, and daughter, Susan.

Russell helped out on the family farm until joining the RCAF in 1942, and he was sent overseas for two years in 1943. He married Alice in July 1945, and they settled on the farm north east of Neilburg where they raised their six children.

Russell was very community minded and volunteered on many boards, committees and building projects. He had been a member of the Legion for 70 years at the time of his passing.

He served on the Council for the RM of Hillsdale No. 440 as Councillor for Division 6 from 1963-1986 and as Reeve from 1987-1992. He saw many changes over the years, including the controversial building of a new office in the early 1990s.

Russell and Alice retired to Neilburg in 1985 where he continued to be active enjoying beekeeping, gardening, community involvement and helping his children with various farming activities.

**RM OF HILLSDALE NO. 440
IN MEMORIAM
BENJAMIN JAMES PARON**

Ben Paron was born in February 1930 on the family farm near Baldwinton, SK. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Jeannine; three daughters, Denise Paron, Dixie (Daryl) Eddingfield and Gina (Camille) Bolen; three grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; and two sisters.

Ben took all his schooling in Baldwinton. During the war years, he belonged to the air cadets and kept busy helping his mother operate the farm while his father was in the army.

He continued to help his dad on the farm until he bought the Baldwinton Hotel in 1952. He and Jeannine were married the same year and raised their three daughters in Baldwinton. In 1977, they sold the hotel and moved to Cut Knife to pursue other business interests.

Ben loved sports. He played ball and golf and was an avid curler. He served as secretary of the Baldwinton Curling Club for over 20 years. He contributed to sports in the community as a player, manager or organizer over the years. He also loved the outdoors, and particularly enjoyed bird hunting and fishing.

Born and raised in Saskatchewan, Ben loved the Saskatchewan Roughriders and was an avid Blue Jays fan.

One of his favourite places to be was the cabin at Attons Lake, which was a gathering place for family and friends.

Ben served as Councillor for Division 1 in the RM of Hillsdale No. 440 from 1963-1976.

NEWS TO SHARE? Be sure to email a short article – including the RM number, individual's name and event (i.e., retirement, in memoriam, award, etc.) in the title – to sarm@sarm.ca and we will include it in an upcoming edition of the Rural Councillor. *Note: please send photos as separate JPG, PNG or PDF files and not as part of a Word document.*



**RM OF LAURIER NO. 38
RETIREMENT
ARVON FETTES**

At its December 9, 2014 council meeting, the RM of Laurier No. 38 honoured Division 3 retiring Councillor Arvon Fettes. Arvon served as the Division 3 Councillor from July 2005 to December 31, 2014.

Reeve Todd Labbie (above left) thanked Arvon for his years of dedicated service as Division 3 Councillor and extended his best wishes on behalf of the municipality. He then presented Arvon with an Yvette Moore Print titled "Road Hockey."



*L-R: Deputy Reeve Wayne Gorrill
and Roger Goffinet*
**RM OF AUVERGNE NO. 76
RETIREMENT
ROGER GOFFINET**

Retiring Councillor Roger Goffinet served in Division 2 from November 2011 to October 2014. During his tenure as Councillor, he sat on the Notukeu Regional Park Board, the Notukeu Heritage Museum Board, and the Ponteix Recreation Board.

In appreciation of his years of service to the municipality, council presented Roger with a plaque.



**RM OF BIG STICK NO. 141
RETIREMENT
QUINTON JACKSTEIT**

The Council of the RM of Big Stick No. 141 wish to announce the retirement of Quinton Jacksteit, Administrator, on July 31, 2015.

On October 17, 2015, council, staff and community members gathered at the community hall in Golden Prairie, SK to honour Quinton for 34 years of service to the community. He was presented with a travel voucher to thank him for his dedication.

Quinton was offered the opportunity to work for the municipality following high school and was appointed as Assis-

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tant Secretary-Treasurer on June 5, 1981. He was officially appointed Administrator of the municipality on July 1, 1983. He received his Rural Class "C" Certificate on June 15, 1983 and his Rural Class "A" Certificate on December 14, 1989. He currently continues to farm and will be able to travel and enjoy his retirement.

During his years of service with the municipality, he also served as Administrator for the Village of Golden Prairie, was involved with the Golden Prairie Volunteer Fire Department and was active with the Golden Prairie Recreation Board. He also served on the local Board of Education in Golden Prairie and Maple Creek. He has been, and continues to be, involved with our community in countless ways. Thank you for your many years of service and dedication!



**RM OF KELVINGTON NO. 366
RETIREMENT
TIM LEURER**

The municipality, staff and council would like to recognize Tim Leurer for 34 years of dedicated service as the Administrator for the RM of Kelvington No. 366. Tim was born and educated in Odessa. After attending business college in Regina from 1972-73, he worked a number of years in accounting for the provincial government. His first exposure to municipal work began in 1977 with the Municipal Services Branch of the Department of Northern Saskatchewan in La Ronge.

In 1979, Tim began the Junior LGA course and became the Administrator for the Town of Big River. During that tenure, he received his Urban "C" and Rural "C" Certificates. In 1981, Tim became Administrator for the RM of Kelvington No. 366 and obtained his Rural "A" Certificate in 1983.

Tim was elected to the RMAA Board of Directors in 2003 as Division 4 Director, serving as Vice-President in 2007 and President in 2011. He also sat as Director *Ex-Officio* on SARM's Board of Directors during this time.

In 2015, Tim stepped down as President of the RMAA and now sits on the Board as the Past-President. He was also appointed by the RMAA to the Municipal Employee's Pension Commission in September 2015.

Tim and his wife, Liz, have three children and one grandchild. On behalf of past and current council members and staff and all the RM ratepayers, we would like to extend a sincere thank you to Tim for his years of service to the RM and wish him all the best in his retirement.



**RM OF BARRIER VALLEY
NO. 397
RETIREMENT
GARRY SCHWEITZER**

A special presentation was made honouring retiring Grader Operator Garry Schweitzer on July 19, 2015 at a barbeque on his behalf. He was presented with a gold watch by Reeve Wayne Black. The watch has the RM logo embedded on its face. Council, staff and the ratepayers of the RM of Barrier Valley would like to thank Garry for his 24 years of dedicated service running a grader up and down our roads.



**RM OF WILTON NO. 472
RETIREMENT
RUPERT TARLETON**

Rupert was elected to the Council of the RM of Wilton No. 472 in 2007. Rupert in his eight year tenure on council served Division 2 and all ratepayers with dedication, kindness and sound judgement. Rupert served not only as Councillor but also as Deputy Reeve for the better part of his time with Wilton.

Having sold the family farm, Rupert decided it was time to hang up his council hat and move on to a life of retirement and pickle ball. Alongside Reeve Dow and Administrator Darren Elder, he provided a reflective approach and positive direction. On behalf of the council and RM staff, we wish him and his wife, Kay, a healthy and happy retirement.



*L-R: Reeve Allan Oliver and
Councillor Paul Prive*
**RM OF AUVERGNE NO. 76
AWARDS
PAUL PRIVE**

Council would like to thank Paul Prive for serving as Councillor for Division 6 from April 2013 to October 2014. During his tenure, Paul sat on the Ponteix Fire Hall Committee and was an alternate representative on the Cypress Health Region Steering Committee. He was presented with a plaque in appreciation of his service to the municipality.

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