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RURAL COUNCILLOR

VOLUME 54 number 1
Spring 2021 ISSUE

PUBLISHED BY THE SASKATCHEWAN
ASSOCIATION OF RURAL MUNICIPALITIES

Publications Agreement #40062693

Economy and Infrastructure

Connecting Rural Canadians in the Digital Age; Infrastructure Starts at Home; Administration is a Key Asset; Budget Season Finally Returns to Ottawa; Changes to Re-valuation this Audit Season; 10 Things to Know About Clubroot and Your RM; Balancing Economy and Liability When Considering Bridge Safety Components

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our vision

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

our mission

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.



Change and Opportunity

By the Honourable Fred Bradshaw

Minister of Highways

Minister Responsible for the Water Security Agency

*The Government of Saskatchewan is investing **\$300 million** in economic stimulus projects over two years. . . . We have \$153M to upgrade 325 km thin-membrane surface highways and \$46M for municipal roads and airports.*

ON BEHALF OF Premier Scott Moe and the Government of Saskatchewan, it is my privilege to serve you as the Minister of Highways and Responsible for the Water Security Agency (WSA).

Rural Saskatchewan is very important to me. I was born in Arborfield and moved to Carrot River, where I have lived ever since. While this is my first time as a Minister, I am not new to public service. I have represented Carrot River in the legislature since 2007, being elected four times in total. It is through these years of serving my community, that I believe I am well versed in the needs of rural Saskatchewan and prepared for my new role as Minister of Highways.

Now, more than ever, our province needs investments in infrastructure. A safe, seamless and efficient transportation system is critical to our economic recovery. To be serious about growth, we must consider the condition of the entire network. Drivers don't distinguish between a road built by the province and one built by a municipality. It has to be seamless.

This is why the Government of Saskatchewan is investing \$300 million in economic stimulus projects over two years, and there is a lot here for rural Saskatchewan. Specifically, we have \$153M to upgrade 325 km thin-membrane surface highways and \$46M for municipal roads and airports. This allowed us to double our commitment to rural municipalities by investing \$28 million in the Rural Integrated Roads for Growth Program in 2020.

Improving safety has been the top priority for our government, and new passing lanes have played a major role in achieving that goal. This method has

played a big part in reducing the risk on our roads for everyone from the truck drivers who ship our products, to family members visiting loved ones. This past fall, we opened new passing lanes on Highway 39 near Estevan, Highway 7 near Kindersley and on Highway 10 between Yorkton and Melville. We have since announced many more passing lane projects, including on Highways 2 and 3 near Prince Albert.

As Minister Responsible for the WSA, I'm excited about the opportunities our farmers, communities and the entire province can enjoy when it comes to food and water security. Traditionally WSA has had a less than stellar reputation in rural Saskatchewan, and in many cases rightfully so. As the new Minister responsible, I have been tasked with changing the relationship between WSA

and rural Saskatchewan. I am committing to a new tone of co-operation and support for our farmers and rural residents.

This new tone must come from the top, which is why I am so excited about our new WSA President Shawn Jaques. As a farmer with decades of working in the agriculture industry, Shawn brings a record of success to his new role at WSA. Together, we want to see the WSA shift from being a roadblock to a facilitator of economic growth.

I am confident these investments will improve safety, and keep our unemployment low. I look forward to meeting our community leaders and hearing their concerns. 2020 has been a challenging year due to COVID-19, and I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for doing what they can to keep Saskatchewan safe.





Minister's Message

By the Honourable Bronwyn Eyre
Minister of Energy and Resources

HAPPY NEW YEAR to you all. As we leave 2020 behind us, it is nevertheless important to reflect on the past year.

Despite the many, clear challenges – and tragic losses – of COVID, the pandemic also revealed many unsung heroes in our daily lives, including frontline and essential workers who have selflessly applied their time, energy and professional expertise to keeping us healthy and safe. Their collective efforts also continue to ensure that our economy and infrastructure remain as strong and possible. On behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan, I would like to thank and acknowledge them.

Many of these workers work and live in our diverse rural communities and include miners, oil and gas workers, forestry hands, or belong to the many supporting businesses that help keep our natural resource sectors running and functional.

As we begin to emerge and recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, our rural communities will play a substantial role in strengthening and building Saskatchewan's economy. One key driver is the province's oil and gas sector, which, last year, accounted for 15.5 per cent of provincial GDP. The combined value of provincial oil and gas production was \$10.5 billion.

To ensure that Saskatchewan people and companies get back to work, the Government of Saskatchewan launched the Accelerated Site Closure Program (ASCP) in May 2020. The ASCP, now well underway, applies \$400 million in federal funding for the abandonment and reclamation of up to 8,000 inactive oil and gas wells and facilities, and over two years, is expected to support approximately 2,100 full-time equivalent jobs in the service sector.

We continue to see new opportunities in the resource sectors and have welcomed a number of new, innovative projects over the past year.

The global demand for lithium is forecast to grow by ten per cent per year due to the expanding use of rechargeable lithium ion batteries in electric cars and portable electronic devices. The Prairie-LiEP Critical Mineral Joint Venture is a two-stage pilot project that will produce lithium hydroxide from Saskatchewan oilfield brines.

Saskatchewan has significant underground reserves of helium, and our province will soon be home to the largest helium operation in Canada. It is being constructed by North American Helium Inc. in the RM of Reno, and it is expected to be in-service by July 2021.

We have also welcomed a hydrogen production project, first of its kind in the world, run by Proton Technologies in the RM of Oakdale. It is working to extract hydrogen from existing oil reservoirs, while carbon dioxide remains trapped in the ground.

Saskatchewan's mining sector also continues to play a major economic role. From 2008 to 2018, an estimated \$36 billion was invested in mineral exploration and development in Saskatchewan, and that investment continues to grow. Saskatchewan remains the largest potash hub in the world, accounting for about one-third of annual global production, and it also has the world's largest high-grade uranium deposits, located in northern Saskatchewan.

Recently, Saskatchewan's mining sector was internationally recognized by the Mining Journal Intelligence World Risk Report, which ranked the province **number one in the world** in its Opportunity Index. Saskatchewan was also one of only two international jurisdictions to receive an **AAA risk rating**.

I am proud to share with you that recently, Saskatchewan's mining sector was internationally recognized by the Mining Journal Intelligence World Risk Report, which ranked the province number one in the world in its Opportunity Index. Saskatchewan was also one of only two international jurisdictions to receive an AAA risk rating.

Meanwhile, our forestry sector in northern Saskatchewan is booming. That sector includes seven large forest facilities that produce lumber, oriented strand board (OSB) and pulp, as well as some 200 or so smaller, related businesses. In November 2020, housing starts in Saskatchewan increased by 72 per cent, compared to November 2019 – a very positive sign for both our forestry sector and broader economy.

As you know, *Our Growth Plan* to 2030 includes ambitious goals and actions for these, and other, important sectors, in order to build a strong economy and quality of life for Saskatchewan people. Rural Saskatchewan and our RM leaders will be critical to that growth and success.

I look forward to continuing to work and collaborate with you to ensure that our province is a leader in natural resource development. Thank you for everything you do. I wish you all the best in 2021.



Minister's Message

By the Honourable Jeremy Harrison
Minister of Trade and Export Development

RURAL SASKATCHEWAN will be vital to Saskatchewan's economic recovery in 2021, following the challenging year that was 2020. With a strong focus on growing exports, our economy will continue to recover in the months ahead.

As the majority of our exports come directly from rural Saskatchewan, RMs will help guide the province throughout this phase of the recovery and the return to growth in the future.

Saskatchewan's economy continues to remain resilient in the face of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Export numbers in agriculture and food products over the past few months continue to increase, thanks to growing global demand. In fact, in the first eleven months of 2020, our exports were up by 3.3 per cent compared to a 13 per cent decline nationally. Saskatchewan continues to lead the nation and was one of only two provinces that saw an increase in exports, rather than a decrease. This major increase in exports is thanks to our agriculture industry, which remains one of the pillars of our economy.

In 2019, Saskatchewan exported \$12.9 billion in agricultural products to 140 countries across the globe, including 10 markets with more than \$315 million in sales. As of November 2020, our exports are \$15.4 billion.

In the first eleven months of 2020, our exports were up by 3.3 per cent compared to a 13 per cent decline nationally. Saskatchewan continues to lead the nation and was one of only two provinces that saw an increase in exports, rather than a decrease.

Agriculture and related activities made up about 10 per cent of our GDP, provided about 40,300 jobs and accounted for more than 44 per cent of our exports in 2019.

Saskatchewan's total agriculture land area is about 62 million acres and 46.7 million acres of productive cropland, which is over 40 per cent of Canada's total productive cropland. We have enormous production capacity and the ability to contribute to global food security. In fact, we grow 87 per cent of Canada's lentils, 83 per cent of its chickpeas, 79 per cent of its durum wheat, 63 per cent of its mustard, 78 per cent of its flaxseed, 54 per cent of its dry peas, 55 per cent of its canola, and 50 per cent of its oats.

We have Canada's second largest beef cattle herd and believe there is significant scope for expansion in beef, hogs, sheep and specialty livestock such as bison. We are world renowned as a consistent supplier of high-quality, safe agri-

cultural products, including ingredients for a variety of foods such as cereals, beverages, baked products, snacks, and bars.

Saskatchewan has the food, fuel and fertilizer the world needs. Continued and improved access to foreign markets are critical to export growth, which is why our government is expanding our international footprint to include three new international trade and investment offices in India, Japan, and Singapore this year, in addition to our existing office in China.

Agriculture and related activities made up about 10 per cent of our GDP, provided about 40,300 jobs and accounted for more than 44 per cent of our exports in 2019.

India is the fastest-growing trillion-dollar economy in the world, with more than 1.3 billion people. Saskatchewan's merchandise exports to India in 2019 were valued at approximately \$775 million, a 23.2 per cent increase from 2018, while Saskatchewan's exports to Japan in 2019 were valued at approximately \$1.1 billion, a 60.9 per cent increase from a decade ago. Japan has the third largest economy in the world and Canada now has improved access to this market, with both countries being parties to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

The Saskatchewan office in Singapore will serve Saskatchewan's interests in Southeast Asia, including the dynamic and fast growing markets of Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Thailand. By locating Saskatchewan's office in Singapore, the province will leverage the country's global and regional connectivity and its position as an international hub for business events, industries and investors. Saskatchewan's merchandise exports to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2019 were valued at approximately \$1.2 billion, making Saskatchewan the second-largest exporter, after Ontario, among all provinces to the region.

China is Saskatchewan's second-largest export market (after the United States), and remains a priority market for the province with total exports in 2019 valued at \$3.1 billion. In 2019, Saskatchewan was the largest Canadian agri-food exporter to China with agri-food exports valued at \$2 billion.

A strong economic recovery will require this new international presence and these offices will strengthen our trade relationships and help us bring safe, secure Saskatchewan products to the world.

Our province's future growth relies on rural Saskatchewan, and we are committed to working with our RMs to find solutions that help build our communities and our economy.

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Advocating Sask's Infrastructure and Economy

By Ray Orb
SARM President

GREETINGS to everyone and I hope you enjoy the spring edition of the *Rural Councillor*.

Without a doubt, Saskatchewan's economy has cooled because of the Covid-19 pandemic. While it may be too early to accurately evaluate what the Provincial Sales Tax (PST) has brought in during the 2020-21 budget cycle, we do know that there have been several small businesses that have slowed, or even shut down. On the flip side, new businesses have started and online sales are high, both of which will contribute to the PST pool.

The Municipal Revenue Sharing pool depends on .75% of the total 6% that the PST brings in. Because of this, SARM is concerned the actual amount that RMs derive is inconsistent which was relayed to Minister Harpauer at a meeting early this year.

We are fortunate that our province has a strong agriculture base, both in crop and livestock production, and we are hopeful we can increase value-added production as time goes on. We are particularly encouraged by the province's proposed expansion of irrigation along Lake Diefenbaker.

We are also fortunate to have strong lumber and mining industries that are huge contributors to our provincial economy.

However, we have a struggling oil and gas industry that has been affected by the downturn in demand due to both a much softer Canadian economy, and to some extent because of federal government environmental policies.

SARM has always been a proponent of pipeline infrastructure that can carry raw crude, and refined products, across the country destined for both domestic and international use. We consider it a mandate of SARM to promote the oil and gas industries that are so important to

our economy... including the economies of many of the rural municipalities.

Therefore, the cancellation of the Presidential Permit for the Keystone XL by President Biden was met with dismay by not only SARM's Board of Directors, but other provincial municipal associations in western Canada as well.

themselves. SARM has very wisely signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the *Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers*, and First Nations Power Authority, both offering a pledge from SARM to work with energy-producing entities.

Although pipelines are an important

Although SARM naturally supports the oil and gas industry, we also support nuclear energy and renewable energy such as solar and wind. We feel that all these forms of energy production can co-exist, and should complement each other, rather than compete against themselves.

It seems almost intolerable that a permit of this nature could be cancelled when a mega-project of this kind was already given the go-ahead just a short time ago. However, the demise of the Keystone XL shouldn't come as a huge surprise since we heard Mr. Biden state his position against the pipeline on several occasions during his Presidential campaign.

The SARM Board was fortunate to have met with Tim McMillan and Sian Pascoe from the *Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers* (CAPP) at a recent board meeting. We shared our mutual frustration with Canada's inability to build new pipelines and discussed future threats to the Enbridge Line 3 and Line 5 pipelines that are already in operation.

Although SARM naturally supports the oil & gas industry, we also support nuclear energy, and renewable energy such as solar and wind. We feel that all these forms of energy production can co-exist and should complement each other rather than competing against

kind of infrastructure, roads and bridges are also integral to moving resources to both domestic and international positions. These resource sectors include agriculture, mining, forestry, and other raw materials destined for processing.

SARM has consistently lobbied for better infrastructure programs and more funding. We are currently dealing with the *Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program* (ICIP) which has a federal/provincial/municipal cost sharing agreement. The province has made a partnership with ICIP to provide funding for rural bridge projects. Additionally, in June of 2020 the province allocated \$28M to the RIRG for the first year of a 3-year program and later added an additional \$16.5M in September as part of the multi-year commitment.

Although Saskatchewan has recently allocated a considerable amount of funding for roads and bridges, clearly more will be needed. Efficiencies in production of all resource industries, including agriculture, are dictating that more is being carried by our rural infrastructure;



as population growth around the world increases demand, our infrastructure demand will also increase.

The last kind of infrastructure that I'd like to mention is digital infrastructure where SARM's areas of focus are Fixed Broadband, Mobile Telecommunications, and Communications Satellite. Further to this, SARM has struck an action committee, met with many of the internet service providers, including SaskTel, and are developing an action plan that will give direction/focus, as well as develop partnerships. The hope is that this may

also assist rural areas in obtaining funding from the federal government's Universal Broadband fund.

As you see, SARM has given much thought towards lobbying the province in an effort to make rural connectivity reliable, consistent, and affordable... as well as making it an essential service.

In closing, I'd like to reiterate SARM's request for everyone to pay attention to the Sask Health Authority updates and to follow the public health orders. SARM is involved with the provincial vaccine roll-

out program and we have been advocating for an orderly roll-out that ensures rural residents receive their vaccinations on a timely basis. We will continue to ask the province to put pressure on the federal government to provide vaccines sooner than later.

I'd like to wish everyone a healthy and safe year and hope we can all work together to achieve some kind of normality as the year goes on.

Photo credit: TC Energy.



It's all about **ENERGY**

By Jay Meyer
SARM Executive Director

THIS EDITION of the *Rural Councillor* is dedicated to infrastructure and the economy. When describing the economy of Saskatchewan, the word energy will often be used as we are leaders in both energy production and distribution. When we talk infrastructure, it is often tagged with energy, such as the Keystone XL or Energy East pipeline projects. I am going to use the word of the year and “pivot” to describe energy in a different way. In times like these, it is hard not to focus on energy being the strength and vitality required to sustain physical and mental activity.

It has been almost a year since the pandemic hit and nearly shut the entire province down. When looking back, I am not sure if it was the quickest or slowest year of our lives. Unanswered questions and lack of consistency has developed anxiety in most people. Sustaining energy in these times can be very challenging. It is critical we do our best to sustain our energy, and while doing so, this energy can be contagious and will help support those around us in sustaining their energy.

It has been a grind for us all. We, as elected officials and staff, have all had to change the way we do things and innovate in a hurry. We have had to conduct our meetings differently, communicate with each other in ways we would have

never thought, as well as follow health and safety protocols we have only seen in movies. This, while trying to do the best we can to keep our families and friends safe and healthy. Let us not forget, it is easy to lead in easy times, true leaders emerge in tough times.

The pandemic has once again shown how strong we are as rural people sticking together to support each other. Humans are social beings, and with limited interactions, it is important to be together as a community.

Being rural exemplifies what it means to be a community.

I would like to thank the SARM Board, the entire SARM team and all the rural municipalities, including the councils, administrators and staff for their strength, energy and determination while serving the people of rural Saskatchewan in such unstable times. We have been through a tough year, and without all of you continuing to serve, the rural population would be in even more difficult times.

The pandemic has once again shown how strong we are as rural people sticking together to support each other. Humans are social beings, and with limited interactions, it is important to be together as a community.

Being rural exemplifies what it means to be a community, and because of this, we rarely celebrate how well we do at sticking together in difficult times. We tend to take our support for each other for granted. Let us finally blow our own horns, pat each other on the back, and

do our best to continue to keep up the energy that is required to get to the finish line.

Without your energy, our economy would crumble. So, let us dig just a little bit deeper and use all the energy we can to win this together. I look forward to seeing you all in person and promise to not take any of our conversations for granted as that is what I miss the most.



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Administration is a key asset

By Guy Lagrandeur
Ex-Officio Director

AS I SIT in my office writing this, I am looking out my window witnessing 80-90 km winds battering a tree across the street, and my mind wondered as to how many road signs will be blown down, how many grain bins are rolling down our grid roads, and what farm structures will survive this one? Our RMs are well equipped, and insured, to handle events such as these, but what about “human infrastructure”? Are they protected and well looked after?

If we continue on the path of “That’s the way it’s always been” we are heading into a direction that none of us wish to take. A shortage of administrators in the RM offices will only be fuel for the groups who wish to use the amalgamation word.

My fellow board members are also writing articles on the economy and infrastructure, and I am leaving that experience and expertise with them. I would like my article to deal with a certain infrastructure that is valuable, needs to be protected, and looked after. The infrastructure I am referring to is the administrator. As an ex-officio member on this board and having the privilege to serve as president of the Rural Municipal Administrators Association, I feel a need to speak on the important, yet delicate, topic of the relationship between councils and their administrators.

To become a qualified administrator a person is required to attain several levels of education and training. It is a huge commitment to reach that level, and once achieved, it takes many years of experience to become a good and respected administrator. Looking at the entire overall operation of an RM, the administrator has a very important role to preserve its standing with the ratepayers. The implication I am striving to deliver to all of you is for councils to take the time and effort and see exactly what administrators are required to do on a daily, monthly and annual basis. It is an important relationship.

It’s important to know where each other are coming from and to understand that we all have different roles to play in a relationship. This also comes with different responsibilities. Most council members come to the office once a month for a meeting and do not see the activities in the administrative trench. This trench can get pretty nasty (and dirty) at times, which I’m sure all administrators can attest to. Understanding each other’s role will assist in expectations and outcomes. If expectations are not clear, conflict can happen. If you have a good relationship with your administrator, keep working diligently to maintain that. If your relationship is in doubt, improve it; there is a lot of competition between RMs for administrators. Just speak to an RM that is searching for a qualified administrator. We are the managers of several departments within the RM, but we can only act on the direction of council. In order to support all the areas that are important to council and its ratepayers, an administrator needs to be qualified, competent and committed.

The RMAA Board is actively pursuing ways to improve its profession, actively seeking ways to recruit new administrators, and continually looking to educate and upgrade our level of competencies. Our associations, along with provincial agencies, are trying to establish a credible format in which to teach and train council members on several topics important to their everyday functions as council members. If we continue on the path of “That’s the way it’s always been” we are heading into a direction that none of us wish to take.

A shortage of administrators in the RM offices will only be fuel for the groups who wish to use the amalgamation word. The RMAA Board is committed to keeping council offices filled with qualified administrators, and we hope councils are committed to supporting their “interior infrastructure,” including ensuring they are appropriately compensated.

We must remember that we are all on the same team. We are here for the betterment of the RM and its ratepayers. Together as a team we can make life in rural Saskatchewan the envy of all municipalities.



Satellite broadband the future of rural connectivity?

By Aaron Holmes-Binns

SARM Senior Policy Analyst

IT WASN'T TOO MANY years ago that I recall firing up the desktop computer and “connecting” to the internet via our family’s dial up modem. The time taken to dial up and load each new web page was a perfect opportunity to warm up a cup of coffee or fill the car up with gas!

Fortunately, for my family, times have changed and we have the luxury of a fibre connection with unlimited data capability. The concept of dial-up and the sound of an external modem are foreign concepts for my two teenaged daughters.

Unfortunately, for many of those living in rural Saskatchewan today, this is still a stark reality. Many of our rural neighbours do not even have access to reliable dial-up internet! For SARM, the lack of reliable high-speed internet for rural residents has been an ongoing advocacy issue. The recent announcement of the Universal Broadband Fund has provided some optimism, but many questions still remain.

Starlink and Telesat have indicated that future commercial and residential customers can expect download speeds between 50 mb/sec and 150 mb/sec and upload speeds up to 23 mb/sec.

In an ideal future scenario, everyone will have the ability to access universal highspeed internet. The crowning achievement would be a fibre connection, direct to the home for all residents in Saskatchewan. This may be attainable at some point in the future, but it comes with high costs to install. The high costs associated with placing fibre to rural populations in large geographical areas, in many ways, does not lend itself to a viable short term solution.

One option that has shown early promise is Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite technology. Companies like Project Kuiper (Jeff Bezos, Amazon), Starlink (Elon Musk, Tesla and SpaceX) and a Canadian provider known as Telesat have entered into a space race of sorts in launching hundreds of satellites in hopes to be the go-to provider for high-speed internet for users located anywhere in the world.

Satellite technology is not new. The technology for communication signals, such as telephone and television, was introduced in the 1960s. Fast forward to present day, and with the introduction of LEO satellites, access to broadband for rural customers is becoming more and more of a reality.

How does it work?

Starlink and Telesat have indicated that future commercial and residential customers can expect download speeds between 50 mb/sec and 150 mb/sec and upload speeds up to 23 mb/sec. The service relies on a constellation of satellites that orbit the Earth in a mesh like formation. Starlink has indicated that it will have a constellation of thousands of satellites once it is fully operational.

In the case of Starlink, the internet signal will be beamed directly to an individual customer. The customer will have a satellite on their property that will pick up a signal from the Starlink constellation. The customer satellite will have the ability to track the constellation of satellites as they orbit the earth and pass over from one horizon to the other. A recent article from *Forbes* revealed that Starlink plans to charge American customers \$99 per month with an additional \$499 for the satellite and router.

Telesat is a Canadian company which was established in 1969 by the Canadian Parliament with a mandate to provide satellite communications services to Canada. Telesat was sold by the federal government to a private company in 1998. Similar to Starlink, Telesat is in initial test phases of their high-speed internet service. In terms of technology, the primary difference from Starlink is that Telesat is not a direct to consumer type service. Telesat’s constellation of satellites will beam an internet signal to a ground station. From the ground station the signal is sent to the customer via a fibre or wireless tower connection. Costs for end users has not been communicated at this time.

Even with the promise of LEO satellite technology on the horizon, SARM continues to focus advocacy efforts towards government and the provincial and federal level to provide broadband funding that will ensure access for all Saskatchewan residents. Further investment in rural broadband will improve and ensure reliable access to high-speed internet service in rural areas. Affordable and reliable broadband will be a game changer for many facets of life in rural Saskatchewan. Access to broadband will allow for the expansion and delivery of education and health care programming, as well as foster economic development opportunities. As future agri-business technologies evolve, there will be an increasing need for high-speed internet in order to take advantage of innovative opportunities.

The sky is the limit, and in this case space, in terms of opportunities and growth that will be available once all of rural Saskatchewan is a player in today’s virtual world.



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Connecting rural Canadians in the **DIGITAL AGE**

By Garth Frizzell

President, Federation of Canadian Municipalities

INFRASTRUCTURE CONNECTS US. We use it to move people and goods. We need it to create jobs and prosperity. In so many ways, it's the foundation of our economy.

In today's digital age, modern broadband infrastructure is just as important as modern roads and bridges. The ability to connect online, fast and reliably, means entrepreneurs can sell their products globally, farmers can access real-time data, and entire communities can reach their full potential.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown just how essential broadband internet is to our economy and to our daily lives – but also how unequally Canadians access it. While millions of people now go online for work, school and basic human connection, many rural Canadians still don't have that option.

That's because of the two million Canadians who still can't access a reliable fixed or mobile Internet connection, most live in rural communities. Many rural residents still have to rely on the spotty dial-up links that urban Canadians left behind years ago. That's simply unacceptable.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has been working for years to close Canada's digital divide, and we're making important progress. After years of advocacy – from FCM, rural leaders and provincial associations like SARM – Federal Budget 2019 committed significant funding toward universal broadband over the next decade, including a new Universal Broadband Fund.

When the pandemic hit, we ramped up our efforts even further. FCM's Rural Forum – chaired by SARM President Ray Orb – urged the federal government to do more, faster. We've heard over and over that the lack of reliable broadband is one of the biggest hurdles rural communities face when supporting residents and businesses through COVID-19.

And it worked. In November, the federal government launched an expanded \$1.75 billion Universal Broadband Fund – up from the \$1 billion originally allocated in Budget 2019. It includes a new Rapid Response Stream to accelerate shovel-ready projects. By December, projects were being approved.

This was a major win for rural communities – for their economies and quality of life. And, it never would have happened without the relentless advocacy of rural leaders in Saskatchewan and across the country. It shows what's possible when municipal leaders work together.

Looking ahead, FCM will continue working with SARM and rural leaders across the country to bring high-speed internet to every Canadian, no matter where they live. It's 2021, and rural communities shouldn't have to wait any longer.

This spirit of working together really drives FCM's mission. It's why our partnership with SARM is so important. And, it's why we're keen to work with each and every one of you to continue bringing rural priorities to Canada's pandemic response.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown just how essential broadband internet is to our economy and to our daily lives – but also how unequally Canadians access it. . . of the **two million Canadians** who still **can't access a reliable fixed or mobile internet connection**, most live in rural communities. Many. . . still have to rely on the spotty dial-up links that urban Canadians left behind years ago. That's simply unacceptable.

Every one of our members is key to forming the strong and united voice that drives FCM's federal influence. It's how we get results. Now we need to grow our national voice – to keep rural communities supported today and to position you at the heart of tomorrow's nationwide recovery. You can be a part of it by securing your FCM membership for 2021-2022.

Rural communities have long been vital to Canada's economy and quality of life, and you'll be essential to building our shared future. So let's continue working together – because we're all in this together.

To learn how FCM is supporting rural communities through COVID-19, visit together2021.fcm.ca.

Garth Frizzell is President of FCM and a councillor in the City of Prince George, BC. FCM is the national voice of Canada's local governments, with more than 2,000 members representing 90 per cent of Canadians.

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Budget Season *finally returns to Ottawa*

By H + K Strategies

TO SAY THAT much can change in the course of a year has now become an understatement here in Canada. When we were last contemplating what a minority Liberal government would be prioritizing for the annual tabling of a budget, the prospect of a deficit north of \$380 billion would have sounded ludicrous at best. Indeed the first economic statement of Trudeau's second mandate was as close to a non-event, plan-on-a-page as we will likely see in the years ahead, as the first intimations of the economic impact of this pandemic were discussed and bets were hedged on any substantive projections on the fiscal stimulus measures. Since then, those measures were express-trained through Cabinet, and then through the House and Senate, to execute a crisis response that all parties agreed was urgently required.

A true budget season is finally upon us once again, after almost two years. It was announced with the launch of an official series of events for pre-budget consultations and a portal for public submissions. Judging from the long-awaited issuance of the mandate letters for Cabinet, some clear commitments will be made to indicate the government has finally set its sights beyond crisis response and is focused on prioritizing for long term economic recovery, with a return to a "fiscal anchor" – a ceiling or cap to public spending – and a "million jobs" plan. However, for rural municipalities and for our key drivers of

regional economic development and diversification, there is still much to be filled in.

There may be some consolation in developments outside of the crisis and the all-consuming logistics operation of the vaccine rollout. There will finally be a return to a somewhat predictable and consistent bilateral dialogue with our biggest trading partner south of the border, which should bode well for trade flows in the long term. The appointments of a Special Representative for the Prairie Provinces in Cabinet (James Carr) and a new Deputy Minister at Finance with some strong bona fides for strategic thinking on infrastructure (Michael Sabia, formerly Chair of the Board of Directors at the Infrastructure Bank) also provide hopeful signs that some strong foundations are being laid for substantive and positive policy decisions.

We can hope we'll have time to see good intentions become good policy, if our first post-pandemic budget garners the support of the Opposition parties who'll be focused on whether it can truly deliver economic growth for all Canadians. If not, a spring election may yet be a reality, and a budget that will finally provide a roadmap to recovery may be further in the offing. If the last year has taught us anything, it might be that there is virtue in being optimistic, be it only for a plan beyond a crisis at last.

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The Spark

**Managing assets means managing infrastructure. . . .
The first step to proper infrastructure or reliable asset management is to see the value (the spark), and then take that first step to learn the fundamentals.**

WHO ELSE started out 2021 with a new year's resolution? Was this the year to commit to that new workout program? Did you decide that each month you'd read at least one book? Is 2021 the year to finally try cooking French cuisine? Whatever the goal that started back in January, or any time a new practice gets picked up, the key is that one day you said to yourself: *Self, let's start now.*

That spark of action and a plan to accomplish a goal is all it takes. When it comes to handling infrastructure and grasping the gargantuan task of systemizing the assets of a municipality, you will need a spark and a plan. The benefits of making informed decisions means infrastructure that is safer, more reliable, more cost effective, and beneficial not just in our lifetimes, but for future generations as well.

Management of Infrastructure (Asset Management)

Here at Asset Management Saskatchewan, we offer information and training opportunities to Saskatchewan municipal stakeholders to improve their knowledge and abilities in municipal infrastructure asset management. Over the last several years, our in-person and online workshops, webinars and training has helped individuals take that spark of wanting to learn and showing them the way to champion asset management within their teams and communities.

Managing assets means managing infrastructure. It means the difference between reactive decision making and proactive decision making. Our communities benefit from proactive decision making by keeping facilities and services running smoothly and reliably, letting citizens trust in their municipal government to provide a level of service that is clear and transparent.

That all sounds great! But just like the results of a workout plan, the results of sound asset management cannot be achieved without the first step. You can't get six pack abs without doing those first sit ups. So, the first step to proper infrastructure or reliable asset management is to see the value (the spark), and then take that first step to learn the fundamentals. You need a learning plan.

The first step is to...

Luckily, that's exactly where we come in. We've defined the plan and are delivering training to municipal staff of small urban and rural municipalities in Saskatchewan. This year we are excited to launch our Learning Path. This is what we see as Step 1 in the overall learning journey or training continuum.

The Learning Path is an awareness building Asset Management Planning training course, totally online and self paced. It's focused on delivering what you need to know, not everything there is to know. We've assembled a world

class team of enthusiastic professionals who are passionate about asset management who make the video lessons engaging. This is tailored to urban and rural municipalities in Saskatchewan with populations of less than 1,000.

Next we have the Initial State of the Infrastructure Report training course. Another self paced and online course that is a simple approach to using your own data to make informed decisions. It has step-by-step walkthroughs to guide you through the process and access to support for any questions throughout the course.

The Learning Path and the State of the Infrastructure Report are brand new offerings from us, and they are part of our overall efforts from the MAMP program in partnership with organizations like SARM. So in 2021 you have access to a brand new learning program, as well as the opportunity to take part in our other training opportunities, including the NAMS+ Online Workshop coming up in April.

We hope this is the year that you and your team finds that spark and either begins or continues an asset management learning journey. Remember it's all about starting now, and there is no right or wrong place to be starting from.

For details and to sign up for our training, visit www.assetmanagementsk.ca. We look forward to connecting with you!
Photo credit: Shutterstock.com



Balancing Economy and Liability when considering bridge safety components

By Daniel Segal, P. Eng., PMP

SARM Director of Municipal Bridge Services



While the answer to the question of “Can’t we just lower or remove that guardrail or delineator?” is not a simple yes or no, our hope is that this. . . document can provide your RM with all of the relevant information you require to develop an informed position and answer that question yourselves.

EVERY RM WITH A BRIDGE has probably experienced the challenges and concerns that come from moving farm equipment across these structures. I suspect there is not a year that goes by where someone does not ask “Can’t we just lower or remove that guardrail or delineator?” As such, it is also a common inquiry to SARM’s lawyers, bridge engineers and the Liability Self-Insurance Plan (LSIP).

In response, Michael Morris, Craig Williams and I decided it was past time for us to create a standard information package related to bridge rail height and bridge end hazard markers. I am pleased to announce the completion of this document and that it is now available on SARM’s website. The document is titled *Bridge Rail Height & Bridge End Hazard Markers*, and it can be located under Resources/Guides, Tools, and Templates/



The images on pages 18 and 19 depict typical damage to bridge safety components in RMs across the province. **Far left:** broken post on a hazard size (abutment 2 left hand side). **Above** (clockwise, left to right): severe wear on hazard size coating (abutment 2 right hand side hazard sign); downed hazard sign; and a missing and broken left hand side rail.

Infrastructure and Development. As a teaser, the document describes the legal obligations of RMs, the currently accepted bridge standards, liability insurance considerations, and basic risk management.

As you might have already guessed, when you bring a lawyer, an engineer and an insurance specialist together to answer a certain question, the answer is going to be anything but short and simple; however, we did our best. While the answer to the question of “Can’t we just lower or remove that guardrail or delineator?” is not a simple yes or no, our hope is that this one document can provide your RM with all of the relevant information you require to develop an informed position and answer that question yourselves. Whereas one RM might look through the package and say that the answer is no because they wish to ensure they take on little to no liability, their neighbouring RM might decide that the value gained in altering the bridge components outweighs the increased liability exposure. Neither RM would be wrong nor unjustified in taking their respective position on the matter.



2021 is a revaluation year when all properties in the province receive updated assessments.

SAMA conducts revaluations based on a four-year cycle. 2017 was the year of the last revaluation, and the 2021 Revaluation will see assessed values updated to reflect a new base date of January 1, 2019. The legislated base date means that 2021 values reflect a property’s value as of January 1, 2019.

Municipalities will be receiving their 2021 values packages in the coming weeks. If you have any questions about your new assessments, please do not hesitate to contact SAMA.

Thank you for your continued support as we look to provide service for our municipal clients while being mindful of the health and safety of our staff and the public.

For more information 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.

Changes to re-valuation this audit season



By Michelle Buechler
RMAA Division 6 Director

GREETINGS from the North West!

We are just about one full year into the COVID-19 pandemic, and I think I can speak for most of you when I say it has been challenging times. We have been isolated from our loved ones, friends and colleagues, but rural people are resilient and will get through this! With all conventions, workshops and district meetings being cancelled or provided by virtual means it does not replace the in-person connections and networking we have become accustomed to.

Re-Valuation years always have their challenges but to add to these challenges is the provincial government's decision to change the Percentage of Values. For the municipalities who rely heavily on commercial and industrial assessment, this change will present some interesting discussions come budget time.

While all of us have dealt with the pandemic in different ways such as working from home, closing the offices to the public or shutting the doors completely, the work still needs to get done, and it can be overwhelming.

With it being audit season, it adds to the already heavy daily workload, and to add salt to the wound, 2021 is a re-valuation year. Re-valuation years always have their challenges, but to add to these challenges is the provincial government's decision to change the percentage of values (POV).

The POV for commercial, industrial, elevator, railway, resource and pipeline properties will be 85 per cent compared to 100 per cent set in 2017 when the previous revaluation occurred. For the municipalities who rely heavily on commercial and industrial assessment, this change will present some interesting discussions come budget time.

Many municipalities in the North West and West Central parts of the province provided the oil and gas industry a break on their 2020 municipal taxes to help with the burden of low oil prices in these uncertain times. This ranged from extending

the five per cent discount to December 31, 2020, reducing mill rate factors (MRF), or abating the municipal portion of taxes on all shut in wells. With the 2021 POVs reducing the taxable assessment on the above mentioned properties, it will be a time consuming effort by administrators and councils to make up the difference in revenue either by raising mill rates, shifting MRFs to different property classes or both.

With many new administrators entering the municipal field, it can be overwhelming as to the amount of work each office deals with and the concern that these new administrators are effectively completing the tasks required of them. The Rural Municipal Administrators' Association (RMAA) with funding from the provincial government through the Target Sector Support Initiative (TSS) have implemented a pilot project which consists of office inspections specifically to help new administrators succeed and to retain them in the municipal field. These inspections are targeted at providing constructive feedback, engaging in discussions, addressing concerns, and how to properly rectify potential issues. The intent of these inspections is not for disciplinary measures, but rather to provide a support network to assist new administrators by specifically dedicated and experienced fellow administrators. Up until 2001, these inspections were previously performed by the provincial government, but the RMAA Board feels the need to assist our new members into becoming competent and successful administrators.

With all the challenges a RM administrator faces on a daily basis, it is more important than ever to have the full support of our councils as we are partners in this venture. As in any workplace, operations run much smoother when everyone works together for the betterment of the municipality.

As I have mentioned in previous articles, please acknowledge the great job your administrator is doing and how much they are appreciated.

Stay safe!!



infrastructure starts at home



Photo credit: Shutterstock.com

By Hunter Reid
Saskatoon 4-H Beef Club

DRIVING DOWN THE ROAD we all look at people's yards. However, a shiny row of bins or a clean feed yard surrounded by a nice wind fence catches everyone's eye. The next thing we say is that looks nice or they must be doing well. This is the case across the province, and these places are often used as landmarks. We have never given it another thought, but these yards have a progressive infrastructure plan.

Producers that invest in infrastructure are noticed and have the impression of being "well off". Even though that is how others think of them, this has nothing to do with how and why they build their yards. These producers take time to plan and research their projects, and of course, the cost involved. They realize that the initial investment might be high, but the long term benefits will be well worth it.

The biggest factor for their decisions is their bottom line. It is what they can afford, how much time it will save, and how it will increase the efficiency of their farm. Many cannot see the benefit with spending money on infrastructure, and the way they do things is just fine. What they have is good enough to get the job done, and they don't have to spend anything. However, producers that invest in infrastructure have a completely different mindset. It can be a big jump to spend money in a business without an immediate cash return. However, investment in infrastructure is more of a long term investment.

We have all heard time is money. In agriculture this is accomplished with infrastructure. It allows you to spend less time fixing or patching things together to get a job done, which equals time. It allows you to do more in a shorter amount of time and with less man hours, which equals money. This will begin to snowball as the more efficient you become, the more you will invest. The money and time you save from an inefficient system is not often money in your pocket. It is then spent on projects that will continue to allow you to grow our business.

Producers that have this type of mindset are able to see the benefits of infrastructure in their business. It allows them to see the benefits in other businesses unrelated to theirs. It is difficult to convince people that a new road or piece of heavy equipment is necessary when they do not have the same mindset. It is at home where benefits of infrastructure will have the biggest impact on us personally. If they cannot see the advantages of upkeep or even starting with small investments to improve their overall efficiency at home, then how can they see their benefits elsewhere?

That nice row of bins or cattle set up that you admire driving by took time and planning. Are they well off? Not necessarily, but they are not spinning their wheels going backwards maintaining something that is not helping them grow.



Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers

Continued success during a challenging year

By **Kevin Brice** Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers President

Statistics	2020 Year	Since Inception (1987)
Arrests	49	3,455
Cases Cleared	46	3,985
Charges Laid	105	2,358
Property Recovered	\$42,830	\$9,939,415
Drugs Seized	\$28,915	\$8,529,021
Awards Approved	49	1,690



SASKATCHEWAN CRIME STOPPERS is pleased to announce another successful year in 2020. Through the cooperative efforts of the public to anonymously report detailed tip information and working in partnership with law enforcement to ensure the proper information is collected for investigation, Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers continues to play a significant role in making our communities safer.

Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers is very honored to be the recipient of the 2020 International Crime Stoppers Award for Total Property Recovered in jurisdictions of 300,000 to 1 million population. The program saw an increase of 1,400 per cent from the previous year through the seizure of property, cash and illegal drugs resulting from successful tips. Other highlights include the ever-expanding increase of our social media presence on Facebook with over 27,000 followers, along with continuing to reach out to all areas of the province to promote and bring awareness to the benefits of the program.

Police Coordinator Sgt. Rob Cozine and Assistant Coordinator Wanda Silzer handle the day-to-day administration of the program and are integral in efficiently managing the tip process that is so vital to the success of the program. Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers is one of five Crime Stoppers programs that operate in the province alongside Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw and Prince Albert.

Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers wants to acknowledge the tremendous financial support from SARM contributors, all corporate and individual sponsors, and the successful partner-

ship with the RCMP to operate the program. We look forward to continuing to work together with all our partners to ensure the safety of our communities.

Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers is very honored to be the recipient of the 2020 International Crime Stoppers Award for Total Property Recovered in jurisdictions of 300,000 to 1 million population. The program saw an increase of 1,400 per cent from the previous year through the seizure of property, cash, and illegal drugs resulting from successful tips.

Individuals can submit a tip by calling 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS), access the website at www.saskcrimestoppers.com or use the P3 app for tablets and smartphones. All contact remains anonymous and anyone providing information that results in an arrest or charge may be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$2000.

For more information or questions about the program, please contact Sgt. Rob Cozine, RCMP Police Coordinator at 639-625-3027.

U of R researcher studying **EVAPORATION** with climate in a box

By Greg Basky (Revisions by University Advancement & Communications)

University of Regina

IN ITS FINAL CROP REPORT of 2020, the Government of Saskatchewan declared that moisture conditions throughout the province remained a concern. Much of the province, the report read, received minimal or below average rainfall along with hot temperatures and drying winds throughout the growing season. Parts of the southern and central regions reported short or very short topsoil moisture conditions for most of the year. This came on the heels of the 2019 growing season that was equally plagued by lack of moisture.

In Saskatchewan, with its semi-arid climate, developing a better understanding of how water evaporates from soils and lakes could have huge implications for farming, municipal infrastructure, and water management.

For Jared Suchan, a doctoral candidate in environmental systems engineering at the University of Regina, the importance of the right amount of precipitation at the right time was a lesson he learned on trips to his grandfather's farm near North Battleford.

"In our family's visits to the farm and conversations with my grandpa, I learned that timely rains were always on his mind during the spring and summer," says Suchan. "It became very apparent to me that moisture was a critical component to the success of the farm."

As part of his PhD program, Suchan has developed a way to study the effects of evaporation by bringing weather into the lab. His Bench-Scale Atmospheric Simulator (BAS for short) is essentially climate in a box. It not only simulates the four factors that drive evaporation – wind, temperature, humidity, and sunshine – but can also manipulate each factor individually while holding the others constant.

"In discussions with my grandpa, I've come to understand that the farming business is a very competitive one with very tight profit margins. If a farmer can save five to ten per cent on an expense in their operations, the profit goes straight to their bottom line in being a sustainable and productive farming operation."

Suchan admits that while there can be occasional excesses of moisture, the long-standing challenge for Saskatchewan farmers and ranchers has generally been managing and optimizing available moisture under dry conditions. This is particularly important in the southwest part of the province and in areas where there is irrigation and the potential for irrigation.

The ability to run various climate simulations in the unit could also help farmers determine what crops to plant under which conditions.

"Crop production practices generally take water availability into account when making crop choices and harvesting practices," says Suchan. "Evaporation from soils and local waterbodies is a critical factor to water availability on farmland."



Improving our knowledge on the atmospheric effects like wind speed, humidity, air temperature, solar energy, and surface effects like surface temperature, and water and soil salinity on evaporation can provide agricultural producers with more information to make production practice decisions."

While he admits he's not an expert in climate change, Suchan speculates that the biggest concern for agricultural producers in the future will be in regards to water availability.

"Competing demands already exist for water between municipalities, agricultural producers, and industrial users on the Prairies," says Suchan. "In the future, we anticipate increased air temperature and extreme weather events occurrences to potentially disrupt our water sources."

Shahid Azam, Suchan's PhD supervisor, says that in Southern Saskatchewan the top three applications for this technology will be the ability to predict soil moisture in agriculture, to find better ways to deal with the effects of Regina's gumbo clay on city infrastructure, and the potential to manage water bodies.

Once he's confirmed the unit's ability to accurately predict the impact of climate factors on evaporation from local bodies of water, Suchan will shift his attention to studying the more complex questions of evaporation from water containing high concentrations of salt (brine) and evaporation from different types of soils. The research is supported by a Discovery Grant from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC).

"This may not be the silver bullet in terms of answering all the questions, but it could be one of the little pieces that helps inform things," says Suchan. "It will be great if we can predict that with more salt in your soil, or with a warmer climate, or with a drier climate, these are the effects we anticipate occurring with water coming and going from the soil."

For more articles on research projects underway at the University of Regina, please see www.discoursemagazine.ca.

10 Things to Know About Clubroot and Your RM



By Katey Makohoniuk CCA, TechAg
SARM Division 1 Plant Health Officer

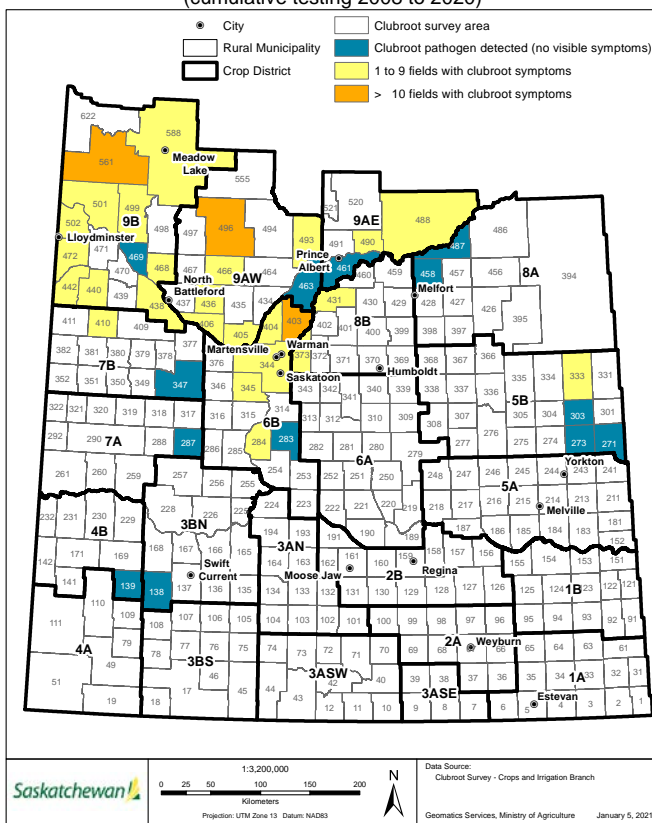
AS WE CONTINUE cautiously into 2021 and transition into another crop year, many issues are on the minds of Saskatchewan producers. At the time of writing, canola prices are approaching record highs, and many farms will consider increasing their canola acres to take advantage of these markets. This means that some already short rotations risk being shortened further, which increases the likelihood of crop pests, such as clubroot, spreading and worsening. This may have important implications for agriculture in the province, since the disease was found in several more fields and RMs in 2020. Here are some things to know when it comes to clubroot and your RM:

1. **The disease is spreading** – 31 new positive fields were identified in Saskatchewan in 2020, bringing the total number of fields to 74.

Clubroot is on the move in Saskatchewan.

31 new positive fields were identified in Saskatchewan in 2020, bringing the total number of fields to 74.

Clubroot Distribution in Saskatchewan
(cumulative testing 2008 to 2020)



2. **The clubroot pathogen has now been identified in the southern half of the province.** In the provincial clubroot map, there are now two RMs in southeast Saskatchewan where the disease was found through soil tests. While visible symptoms were not identified, it is important to note that vigilance is key in these locations in the coming season.
3. **Clubroot moves any way that soil can move.** Recent dry conditions may be a good thing in some ways, as wet soil sticks to equipment more than dry soil does. However, soils that are dry and without vegetative cover are always at risk for wind erosion, which can cause the disease to spread from infected fields. This spring season be mindful of where your RM's equipment is working and take steps to prevent moving soil from farm to farm.
4. **Biosecurity measures are key in preventing the spread of clubroot.** As mentioned above, making plans to reduce the movement of soil can prevent major headaches later. Liability is also a concern if RM equipment is blamed for moving the disease.
5. **What is clubroot biosecurity?** It is the act of taking measures to prevent or limit the spread of the disease. Things such as equipment inspection for soil particles, employee education, equipment sanitation, and the use of boot covers or boot washes, can all have a role in your RM's clubroot plan.

6. **Clubroot is a declared pest under the Saskatchewan Pest Control Act.** This means that the enforcement process is legally binding and is controlled at the RM level by pest control officers.

A clubroot policy can be a helpful “tool in the toolbox” to assist your RM in dealing with the disease.

7. **A clubroot policy can be a helpful “tool in the toolbox” to assist your RM in dealing with the disease.** This policy outlines your RM’s plan for handling clubroot. It details what is expected from ratepayers and contractors living and working in the RM, and it lists important information based on science and research regarding sampling methods, where to submit samples, and procedures for when positive fields are identified.
8. **The partner to the clubroot policy is the clubroot bylaw.** While the word “bylaw” can be stressful to some, the main purpose of this bylaw is to ensure that the RM council and administration is notified when the disease has been identified within the RM boundaries and to

ensure that a clubroot management agreement will be created when required. This is beneficial because it gives the RM a head start when dealing with the disease, so that it can be effectively managed. The bylaw also protects producers by ensuring that the RM will deal with any clubroot cases in a consistent and science-based manner. There is a sample clubroot bylaw and policy available at sarm.ca or from your plant health officer. Once the bylaw is passed, it is a good idea to share it with ratepayers to increase awareness and education of the disease and expectations under the bylaw.

9. **Have a discussion with your pest control officer and ask if they are willing and able to take on clubroot in addition to their existing duties with rodent control.** Historically, most existing PCOs only have experience with rodents, and many of them are not comfortable with clubroot. However, there may be a few PCOs that are interested and willing to learn more, which is great! If they are not equipped to deal with it, there is also the option to appoint a plant health officer as clubroot PCO.
10. **Remember, you are not alone –** SARM’s plant health officers are ready and waiting to help you and your council with all the above. We are aligned closely with the Ministry of Agriculture, and we are working to be an incredible resource for administrators, council members, and appointed officials. Contact your division’s PHO this spring for assistance!



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CATHERINE

Director of Finance

Q What year did you start at SARM?

I started working at SARM in August 2004.

Q What is the most interesting thing that's happened at SARM since then?

The expansion of types of programs and services offered, the growth in staff numbers, and the new building.

Q Hometown?

I grew up in Regina.

Q Tell us one thing people might not know about you?

I was born in Toronto, was a toddler in Yellowknife, grew up in Regina, went back and forth between Ottawa and Vancouver during university before finally graduating from the University of Ottawa. I met my husband in Ontario and brought him back to Saskatchewan where we married and decided to stay to raise our growing family of six boys and one girl.

AMANDA

Accounts Administrator

Q What year did you start at SARM?

2011

Q What is the most interesting thing that's happened at SARM since then?

How much SARM has advanced and grown.

Q Hometown?

Regina

Q Tell us one thing people might not know about you?

Prior to starting at SARM, I lived in Vancouver for seven years.

BREANNA

Senior Accountant

Q What year did you start at SARM?

I started with SARM in 2015.

Q What is the most interesting thing that's happened at SARM since then?

My progression to becoming a permanent employee. I had two temporary back-to-back term positions before being hired in my current role in 2017.

Q Hometown?

My family moved around as I was growing up, but I lived in Kamloops, BC for the largest portion of my growing up years, so I consider it my hometown.

Q Tell us one thing people might not know about you?

In my spare time I enjoy doing hands on activities, such as gardening, cake decorating and renovations.

GAYLENE

Accounting Assistant

Q What year did you start at SARM?

2020

Q What is the most interesting thing that's happened at SARM since then?

The transition to working from home.

Q Hometown?

Regina

Q Tell us one thing people might not know about you?

I grew up with a visually impaired father and spent a lot of time around visually impaired and blind individuals, and I spent a lot of time volunteering with them.

Member news



Harry Barker
RM of Surprise Valley No. 9
In Memoriam

Harry Barker, age 88 years, formerly of Gladmar, SK passed away on March 12, 2020. Harry lived with his parents and

brothers on the family farm south of Gladmar most of his life. In later years, he moved into the community of Gladmar. When his health failed, he moved into the Bengough Health Centre. He served as Division 1 councillor for the RM of Surprise Valley No. 9 from 1973 to 1982. During his term on council, Harry represented the council on the South East Regional Library and the ADD Board and served on the municipality's Finance Committee.



Joseph (Tony) Anton Frischholz
RM of Surprise Valley No. 9
In Memoriam

Tony farmed in the Minton area most of his life. He married Theresa Uytterhagen on October 15, 1956.



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Tony and Theresa raised four children on their family farm. Tony and Theresa sold their farm in 1996 and retired to live in Minton. In 2008, they retired to Weyburn. Tony served as Division 3 councillor for the RM of Surprise Valley No. 9 from 1981 to 1984. During his term on council, he represented the council on the municipality's Cemeteries Committee and served as their weed inspector.



Adolph Hoffart
RM of Surprise Valley No. 9
In Memoriam

Adolph Hoffart, 81 years, passed away on November 28, 2020. Adolph married Stella Marchand on April 23, 1960. They lived in Regina, SK, and Adolph worked at Mid West Motors as a mechanic. Adolph and Stella had a family of four, and in 1968 they moved the family to the farm south west of Minton, which he had previously purchased from his brother.

He opened a garage repair shop on the farm in the early 1970's. In 1986, they bought a house and shop in Gladmar and continued to farm and run their shop until 1991 when they sold the farm. In 2000, Adolph and Stella moved to Griffin and commuted to Weyburn where they were both employed.

In later years they moved to Weyburn and eventually retired. Adolph served as Division 3 councillor for the RM of Surprise Valley No. 9 from 1985 to June 1991. During his term on council, Adolph represented the council on the municipality's Cemeteries Committee, the Fire Board and the Clear Lake Regional Park Board.

Terry William Frederick
RM of Laurier No. 38
In Memoriam

Terry William Frederick, late of Weyburn, SK, passed away on August 4, 2020 at the age of 75 years.

Terry served as councillor for the RM of Laurier No. 38 at Radville in Division 1 from 1981 to 1986.

Terry is survived by his wife, Elaine; his children, Rose Anne (Paul) McInnes and family: Alisha, Carsey (Chantel), Emerson (Chelsy), Skylar, Chris; Tracy (Cyril)

Tessier and family: Keely (Greg), Keegan, Keena, Keera, Keesha, Keefer; Troy (Charlotte) and family: Blake, Jeanette, Rebecca, Adam; Jason (Lisa) and family: Shayne, Bemnet, Yodit; Jamie (Brent) and family, Logan and Lauren; four great-grandchildren: Barrett, Brysen, Gracy, Katy; three aunts: Dorothy Lindskog, Dorothy Frederick, Sylvia Gent; sister-in-law, Vicky Frederick; and numerous nieces and nephews.



Garnet Vigoren
RM of Lakeview No. 337
In Memoriam

Garnet Raymond Vigoren passed away at St. Paul's Hospital on Tuesday March 10, 2020 with family by his side. Garnet was born in Wadena, SK on July 18, 1936 to Palmer and Mary Vigoren, the oldest of three children.

Garnet is survived by his wife of 62 years, Margaret (Roberts); their chil-



YOU CAN HELP SOLVE THIS CASE AND EARN CASH REWARDS IF THE INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE LEADS TO THE ARREST OR CONVICTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL(S) INVOLVED.

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UNSOLVED CASE

Dorintosh Conservation Officers are asking the public to come forward and report this total disregard for wildlife in Saskatchewan.

During a six week period between October 17th and November 29th, 2020, five deer were shot and left to waste near the community of Dorintosh. The dates the carcasses were found are October 17, November 10, 11, 13, and 29.

The meat from these animals could have fed a lot of people, and this deliberate killing is unacceptable.



dren, Brenda (Brian) Bahnmann, Mark (Simone), Glen (Tracy) Vigoren (children, Dean (Amber) and Ashly (Andy)), Cheryl (Brad) Harvey (children, Crystal and Bradley (Donnan)); brother Robert (Estelle) Vigoren; four great grandchildren, Avery, Kai, Madeline and Ezra; and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Garnet is predeceased by his parents, Palmer and Mary; his sister, Shirley and her husband, Martin Kozar; and an infant sister.



Carmen Sterling
RM of Weyburn No. 67
Retirement

Carmen Sterling ran for Division 2 councillor in the fall of 2001. In a three-way election she was the successful candidate and became the Division 2 councillor in January 2002. At the time, Carmen had two young daughters at home as well as a full-time job.

In 2004, after the unfortunate death of Reeve Dan Sidloski, Carmen resigned her seat as Division 2 councillor and ran uncontested for reeve. She became reeve of the RM of Weyburn No. 67 on April 21, 2004.

During her time as reeve, she continued to raise her family and work in the financial industry. In 2014, Carmen became the Division 1 representative at the SARM. In 2016, she became the Vice-President. During her time at SARM, she sat on various committees.

As reeve of the RM of Weyburn, Carmen showed grace and grit and was very involved. She sat on many committees and was an integral voice as she championed the RM and looked out for the betterment of all ratepayers within it.

On behalf of all the ratepayers, employees and councillors, past and present, we wish to thank Carmen for her time and dedication and wish her well in whatever her future endeavours may be.



Edward Mish
RM of Golden West No. 95
Retirement

Edward Mish retired January 31, 2021, marking over 38 years of dedicated service as the administrator of the RM of Golden West No. 95.

After training in the RM of Sherwood, Edward started with the RM of Golden West in June 1982. Outlasting many Reeves and councillors, Edward quickly became the history book for everything RM related, recalling not only when events or projects occurred, but also the reasoning behind the decisions that were made. This knowledge will be missed around the council table and in the office; he leaves big shoes to fill.

His commitment to the community extended far beyond the office. He served on the Organized Hamlet of Corning Board, is a volunteer firefighter for the local department, was an actor and president of the Corning Players Association and is always ready to lend a hand with the snowmobile club or at the rink. While COVID-19 has waylaid plans for a retirement party, one will be held in the future when the whole community can attend.

On behalf of the RM of Golden West No. 95, the Organized Hamlet of Corning, the ratepayers and employees, we wish to express our thanks and appreciation to Edward, and we wish him the best in his future endeavors.

Dennis Lynch
RM of Lajord No. 128
Retirement

Dennis Lynch was a councillor for Division 1 from January 1993 to November 2020 with the RM of Lajord No. 128. Thank you for your dedicated service to the RM, and we wish you all the best in the retirement.



Kim Mclvor
RM of Edenwold No. 158
Retirement

It was with a heavy heart that we said goodbye to our Chief Administrative Officer Kim Mclvor, who retired on December 18, 2020. Mclvor made important contributions to the planning and development in RMs across southern Saskatchewan throughout his 27 year career as a municipal administrator. His last eight years here in the RM of Edenwold has helped guide the region through a time of unprecedented growth, diversification and uncertainty. His commitment and dedication to supporting the RM's council, residents, farmers and business owners has had an enormously positive impact on the community and surrounding neighbours.

During his tenure, the RM of Edenwold completed hundreds of new infrastructure projects, including roads, streets, utilities, buildings and bridges. He also implemented the Community Safety Officer and bylaw court programs, led local improvement district projects with different communities, collaborated with neighbouring towns on a variety of initiatives, and oversaw the move from Balgonie's shared office space to the bright, newly-built, efficient office in Emerald Park – to name just a few of his accomplishments. His leadership, professionalism, experience and commitment to the RM has positively impacted the lives of everyone who resides, works and does business here, and his presence will be sorely missed.

We wish Kim and his wife, Cori Lynn, all the best in the next chapter of their lives and, of course, want them to know they are always welcome here in the RM of Edenwold.

Glen Collins
RM of Snipe Lake No. 259
Retirement

Larry Kitzul
RM of Foam Lake No. 276
Retirement

Larry was an equipment operator with the RM of Foam Lake No. 276 for almost 20 years and will be greatly missed.



Harold Jenkins
RM of Humboldt No. 370
Retirement

Councilor Clarence Puetz (left) presents Harold Jenkins (right) a retirement gift for Harold's 14 years of service as councilor for Division 1 for the RM of Humboldt No. 370. The RM wishes Harold a happy, healthy retirement.

Donald Forest
RM of Tisdale No. 427
Retirement

The RM of Tisdale No. 427 would like to recognize Donald Deforest for 16 years of service to Division 1. His experience and knowledge in bridge and road building will be greatly missed.



Erwin Beitel
RM of Lajord No. 128
Award

On behalf of the RM of Lajord No. 128 we want to recognize Erwin Beitel for his years of service as reeve. Erwin served as the reeve from January 1999 to November 2020. Thank you for your dedication to the RM, and we wish you all the best in the future.

Doug Knippelberg
RM of Snipe Lake No. 259
Award

Member News
submission tips:

- Photos: JPG, PNG, TIFF or PDF files at 300 dpi resolution. Check the file size. If it is <100 KB, it may not print properly.
- Try to send original photos not ones that have been scanned from printed documents or taken off of a website.
- Write-up length maximum: 250 words.
- Email submissions to sarm@sarm.ca.

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Redhead EQUIPMENT

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First Place

Request for Service App

City of Moose Jaw

Developed an app that records and tracks requests for service submitted by residents, and provides valuable two-way communication between the city and its residents.

Second Place

737 Volunteer Fire Department

RMs of Souris Valley and Lomond

Established a volunteer fire department to provide wildland fire fighting services to residents and ratepayers of both municipalities in addition to mutual aid to neighbouring municipalities and counties.

Regional Cooperation

Regional Rideshare Initiative

RMs of Edenwold, Pense, Lumsden, Lajord, and Bratt's Lake
Towns of Balgonie, Grand Coulee, Pilot Butte, Pense, and Lumsden
Villages of Buena Vista and Belle Plaine

Developed a regional rideshare framework where member municipalities adopt complimentary bylaws, allowing rideshare companies to operate within their municipality once the companies have obtained a regional rideshare license.

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