

RURAL COUNCILLOR

SARM

2023
WINTER

VOLUME 56 / #4

SWIRL

SASKATCHEWAN
WOMEN
IN RURAL
LEADERSHIP

EDUCATION

STUDY CLOSE
TO HOME
SASKATCHEWAN'S
REGIONAL COLLEGES

TIPS

FACING
DROUGHT,
WHERE CAN
I GET HELP?

Q&A

SICK, INJURED,
OR DISABLED
EMPLOYEES



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RURAL COUNCILLOR

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CONTENTS

- 4** Ray Orb, SARM President
- 7** Jay Meyer, SARM Executive Director
Communications- times they are a changing
- 10** Judy Harwood, SARM Division 5 Director
SARM at the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians
- 12** Darwin Whitfield, SARM Division 6 Director
Facing Drought, Where Can I get Help?
- 14** R. Doran Scott, RMAA Director Division 5
The 'S' Word
- 16** The Honourable Paul Merriman,
Minister of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety
- 18** The Honourable Jeremy Cockrill
Minister of Education
- 30** Richardson's Ground Squirrel Control Know Your Options and Rebates Available
- 36** A better future for Saskatchewan: Time for a new Municipal Growth Framework
- 38** A Socioeconomic Look into Saskatchewan's Agriculture Community
- 40** Creating a Respectful Work Environment: Addressing the Impact of Toxic Behavior
- 44** Getting to know SARM - Policy & Research
- 45** Member News

Our Vision: Strong, autonomous municipalities powered by vibrant, diverse economies that build a sustainable future for rural Saskatchewan.

Our Mission: To foster rural development in Saskatchewan and build strong, sustainable communities.

FEATURES

20 Consider Being a Crop Reporter



22 Study Close to Home at Saskatchewan's Regional Colleges



24 Are your fleet vehicles winter ready?



28 Ways to Stay Active in Rural Municipalities



34 Questions (and Answers!) about Sick, Injured, or Disabled Employees



Gain a Competitive Advantage by Using a Systems Approach

42



Photo credit: Maricris Moresca, in Lipton, SK



**BY RAY ORB,
SARM PRESIDENT**

Hello to all reeves, councillors, administrators, and anyone else reading this article.

If you asked a “Saskatchewanian” to comment on things that are currently the most important to them they will probably tell you it’s the provincial economy and personal finances.

There have been surges in inflation in recent years. Saskatchewan’s rate of inflation from August 2022 compared to August 2023 came in at 4.4% which was the fourth highest among the Canadian

provinces. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is forecast to be approximately 1.4% over the next three years, which is not stellar but about the national average of GDP growth of all provinces, except for Alberta which is forecast to be approximately 1.8% over the next three years.

Saskatchewan’s unemployment rate is currently at 5.40% which is lower than the long-term average of 5.87%. This bodes well for a province that continues to attract people to live here; the population has increased by just over 33,000 from the first quarter of 2022 to the first quarter of 2023, which was the largest growth seen since 1914.

Without a doubt, Saskatchewan is growing, and the rural area of the province continues to contribute greatly to the provincial GDP from several industries, including oil and gas,

agriculture, mining, forestry, manufacturing, and tourism. In 2022 Saskatchewan’s GDP rose to an astronomical \$81.8 billion which was an increase of 5.7% over the year prior, and incidentally, was the highest increase of any province in Canada.

Each of the above-mentioned industries requires infrastructure, including roads, bridges, utilities (including water), as well as different types of infrastructure, such as high-speed internet and cell phone coverage. Saskatchewan’s economy is highly dependent on the rural contribution to the provincial GDP.

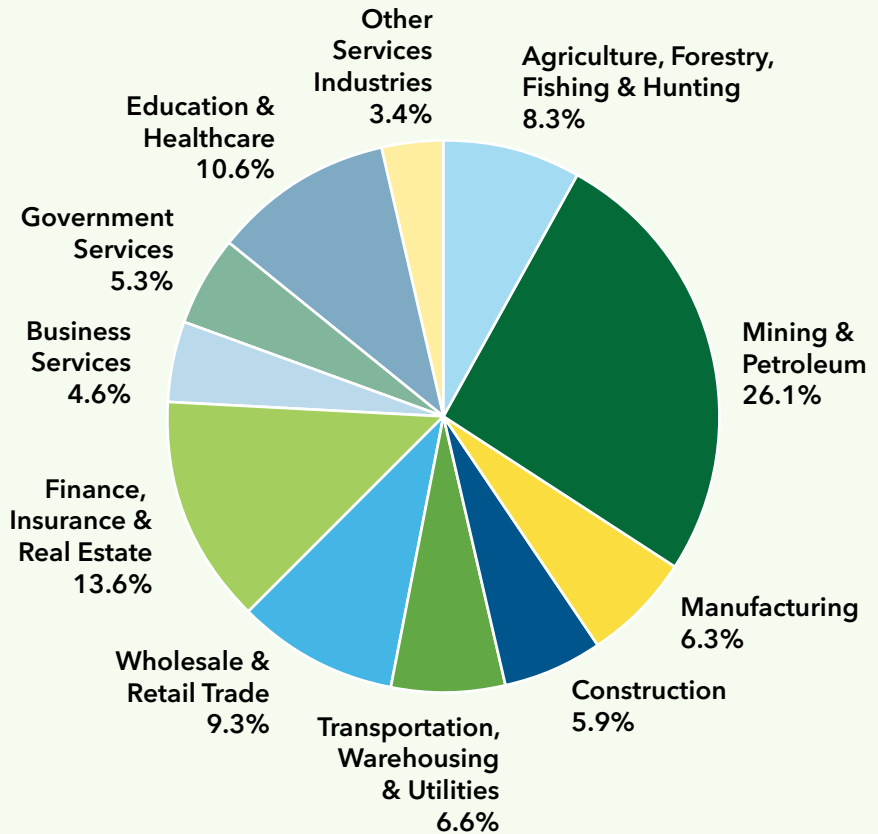
In 2018 the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) commissioned a report called “Rural Challenges, National Opportunity”. After completing extensive research, the report concluded that on average, rural Canada contributes approximately 30% to the national

2022 GDP BY INDUSTRY BREAKDOWN

This chart demonstrates that the contribution from rural-based industries is much higher than the national provincial average, coming in at over 40%.

** Business Service Industries include: Information and culture industries; Professional, scientific and technical services; Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services.*

GDP at Basic Prices by Industry, Chained (2012) dollars



IN 2022 SASKATCHEWAN'S GDP ROSE TO AN ASTRONOMICAL \$81.8 BILLION WHICH WAS AN INCREASE OF 5.7% OVER THE YEAR PRIOR, AND INCIDENTALLY, WAS THE HIGHEST INCREASE OF ANY PROVINCE IN CANADA.

GDP, with some provinces contributing even more.

The demand for infrastructure that can carry an ever-increasing number of resources and manufactured goods to market position will be up for discussion as the federal government takes feedback from organizations such as SARM on a new infrastructure program that will

replace the current Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP).

SARM believes that the new program (which will eventually need to be signed onto by the province), must be more responsive to the needs of rural Saskatchewan. It should not take in the population factor as much as the GDP contribution and the need to keep Saskatchewan's strong economy moving forward. It must also recognize that food security in today's world is paramount to the well-being of not only Canadian citizens but worldwide.

The new program must have a separate rural component and it must have federal, provincial, and municipal cost-sharing formulas that are affordable for the lesser populated municipalities, such as some of the rural municipalities in our province. The formula must allow stacking from other funding programs, such as

the Gas Tax Fund and any other applicable federal and provincial programs. The application and approval process must be as straightforward as possible, and inflation must be considered for larger projects.

The provincial economy will continue to be driven by rural Saskatchewan since most of the raw resources are located there, with more processing and manufacturing being done locally. It is the professionals who grow the crops, raise the livestock, do the mining and the logging, and manage and maintain Saskatchewan's rural municipalities that drive a significant portion of the economy. SARM will strongly advocate the federal and provincial governments to receive a bigger piece of the infrastructure pie.

Enjoy the winter season and stay healthy everyone.



SASKATCHEWAN MUNICIPAL AWARDS

Accepting Nominations September 12 - November 21, 2023

Established in 2006, the Saskatchewan Municipal Awards celebrate the excellent and innovative practices of Saskatchewan's municipal governments. Awards are presented to municipal initiatives that demonstrate innovation and betterment for a municipality.

Award Categories

New for the 2023 municipal awards, awards will be presented to the top municipal initiative, the top rural municipal initiative, and the top urban municipal initiative, that demonstrate innovation and betterment for their municipality. A Regional Cooperation Award is also given out to urban and rural municipalities working together on a cooperative project.

What Winners Receive

- A professional video highlighting their community and showcasing their project;
- An award commemorating their municipal accomplishment; and
- Exposure and recognition in front of hundreds of their municipal peers at the SARM and SUMA conventions in 2024.

**Learn more and submit
your nomination online at
municipalawards.ca.**

The Saskatchewan Municipal Awards are a joint partnership between New North, the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM), the Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA), the Ministry of Government Relations, the Rural Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan, and the Urban Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan.



COMMUNICATIONS-TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGING

BY JAY MEYER, SARM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In the ever-changing world of communications, it is important organizations adapt to the needs of their customers. At SARM, we are no different.

It was not long ago that the major sources of information came from the news on morning radio or evening television. This is not the case anymore. If anything, we are inundated with information to sift through and there must be a balance.

Over the past decade, SARM has been advancing our communications. Getting a message out is important, but just as important is how it's done. Our personal inboxes seem to be jam-packed these days, and I often wonder how many emails are opened, let alone read. This is where strategy comes in.

SARM has put a lot of thought and effort into what is the most effective and efficient way to engage with our membership. It all started back in 2015 when we hired the first team member whose prime focus was on communications, and when the organization took baby steps into the world of social media. That has now grown into a department of very skilled and talented individuals working on behalf of our membership. This team is tasked with identifying the most

effective and efficient tools to communicate with membership, media, ratepayers, and external stakeholders.

SARM's communications team has developed three main publications which are the Rural Dart, the Rural Sheaf, and the Rural Councillor. These publications include all things currently happening or affecting rural Saskatchewan regarding the economy, infrastructure, agriculture, environment, recreation, tourism, governance, or other pertinent information to rural Saskatchewan. These publications are open to anyone who wishes to sign up for them.

THE RURAL DART (WEEKLY)

Includes time-sensitive information and deadlines in an easy-to-read and accessible format with a focus on SARM Policy initiatives, government undertakings, digital advertising, and updates on what's new.

THE RURAL SHEAF (MONTHLY)

Includes important deadlines, pertinent information from SARM departments, approved suppliers, and the federal and provincial governments, as well as resources, training opportunities, and updates on what's new.





Publications & Social Media

Includes anything currently happening or affecting rural Saskatchewan regarding the economy, infrastructure, agriculture, environment, recreation, tourism, governance, or other pertinent to rural SK topics.



The Rural Dart (RD)

Weekly (digital, every Tuesday) at 10AM

Includes time sensitive information and deadlines in a quick to read and access format with a focus on SARM Policy initiatives, government undertakings, digital advertising, and current updates.



X



The Rural Sheaf (RS)

Monthly (digital, the last Friday of every month)

Includes important deadlines, pertinent information from SARM departments, approved suppliers, and the federal and provincial governments, as well as resources, training opportunities, and current updates.



Facebook



The Rural Councillor (RC)

Quarterly: March (spring), June (summer)
September (fall), November (winter)

Includes messages from the SARM board and provincial ministers, as well contributor articles, all providing an in-depth look at the issues SARM is working on and those facing rural SK.



LinkedIn



SARM Publications:
the RD, RS, RC,
News Releases,
and Annual Reports



Sign up to
receive SARM
Publications

The Voice
of Rural SK

sarm.ca



THE RURAL COUNCILLOR (QUARTERLY)

Includes messages from the SARM board and provincial ministers, as well as contributor articles, all providing an in-depth look at the issues SARM is working on and those facing rural Saskatchewan. Roughly 1000 printed copies and 800 digital copies are distributed.

Social media has grown as a tool for businesses to communicate with the outside world. It is a great avenue to spread the word quickly to individuals. SARM's Strategic Communications team has elevated SARM's social media game to three platforms which include X, Facebook, and LinkedIn. These platforms provide an opportunity for our members to see up-to-date activities of the association including meetings at Parliament Hill in Ottawa or the Legislative Building in Regina. SARM's social media followers continue to grow monthly.

SARM's presence in the news media has grown substantially over the last couple of years. Over the past three quarters of 2023, SARM has sent out 11 news releases that have attracted more than 293 media articles on topics such as agriculture, policing, energy and resources, environment, and broadband to mention a few. On top of that, the SARM President has done over 80 interviews with media in and outside of our province. Understanding who SARM is and who SARM represents is critical to our advocacy efforts, and these numbers prove it is working.

Let's not forget that SARM also provides other options to engage with our membership and stakeholders. SARM's website has many tools to assist the membership and has seen over 60,000 visitors in the last three quarters of 2023. Our membership has stated that capacity building is a challenge due to time, distance, and costs, hence the

development of virtual webinars for the association. Over three quarters SARM has seen 6 webinars with a total of 300 attendees. All of these are recorded, and shared, on the SARM website where close to 200 recorded views have taken place.

These are exciting times for the SARM Strategic Communications team as they continue to grow and advance the tools our members are asking for. The team believes in putting innovation at the forefront and has the courage to change. The great work they do proves this. SARM has come a long way over the past decade, if you have yet to jump on board, please do. It is easy to sign up for our publications, all you have to do is go to the SARM website at sarm.ca and find the sign-up at the bottom of the home page. If you wish to track SARM's advocacy efforts just follow any of our social media platforms. Don't let the FOMO or fear of missing out get to you, we would love to have you join us.

2,400

Saskatchewan workers
are seriously injured
every year.

Together, we can
lower that number.

WorkSafe[™]
SASKATCHEWAN

Work to live.

worksafesask.ca



WorkSafe Saskatchewan's **2023-2028 Fatalities and Serious Injuries Strategy** focuses on reducing serious injuries and fatalities through regulation, enforcement, prevention, learning – and working with partners like you.



Read the strategy and learn what you can do to prevent serious injuries and fatalities in the workplace.



CANADIAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE SARM AT THE COMMONWEALTH WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

**BY JUDY HARWOOD,
SARM DIVISION 5 DIRECTOR**

Another year is drawing to a close, again I ask myself where has the time gone, is it a sign of getting older, heaven forbid?

This past year I received an email from Lisa Thompson, Chair of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians - Canada Region, as well as the Ontario Member of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs and Member of Provincial Parliament, riding Huron-Bruce. Lisa asked if I would consider being a guest speaker for their July event in Regina. I was honored to be asked, and of course, said yes. The suggested topics for my presentation were Inspiring Women by Example and an update on Saskatchewan Women in Rural Leadership (SWIRL), an event I am proud to have initiated at SARM.

I spoke of my first foray into rural politics, six years as a councillor at the RM of Corman Park from 1994 to 2000, and the trepidation of taking that first step. Also, my decision to run for Reeve of the RM in 2012, which meant that I had to run against the incumbent Reeve. I was successful, but the challenges of coming into that position from the outside, and being female, were sometimes daunting.

Women make a difference and should get involved at the rural municipal level. Elected officials should accurately reflect the population they serve. It is easy to see rural politics benefitting from encouraging and electing more women to municipal government. It is imperative that we continue to promote and support women who have the initiative and courage to take on the challenges of rural politics.

**I WANT TO SHARE A FEW
OBSERVATIONS I HAVE LEARNED
OVER THE YEARS:**

1. Around the Council or Board table don't become one of the boys; you were elected as a woman. You will gain respect by being you.
2. Be prepared for your meeting, read and know your material, knowledge is power.
3. Work as a team and don't hold grudges. Grudges are like drinking poison and thinking the other person is going to die... they only hurt you.
4. Share your opinion with confidence, don't be invisible.
5. Ask questions, I promise if you want to know so do others.
6. Make good solid decisions based on facts and what is best, not on friendships or alliances around the table.
7. Dress for the position.
8. Develop a thick skin.
9. Don't be a yes woman.
10. Believe in yourself.



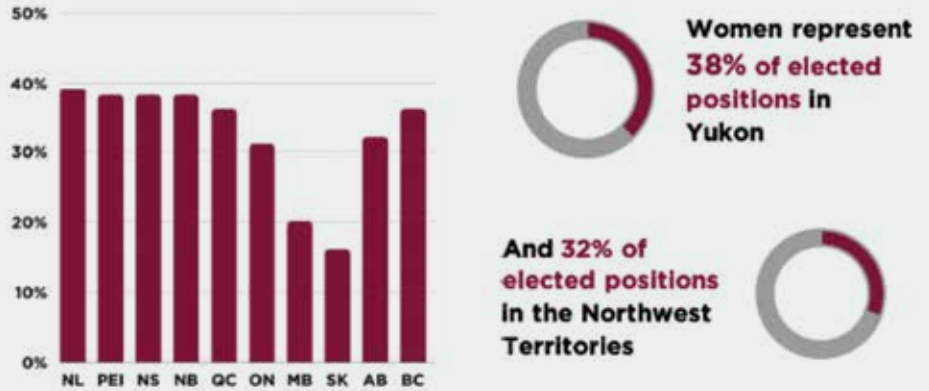
I have always been impressed with how men support each other, they can be on opposite ends of a heated discussion then leave the room and they are having a beer together. We must realize that the success of every woman should be an inspiration to another. Remember the only way, as women, we give up our power is by thinking we don't have any. Don't ever apologize for being a strong woman.

SWIRL is an initiative I hope to leave as part of my legacy with SARM. Our first SWIRL event was a networking breakfast on March 15, 2023, at SARM's Annual Convention. SWIRL is for elected women in rural Saskatchewan so they could have a venue to discuss issues, concerns, or ideas from around their council table and RM. The first meeting proved to be a great success, the women in the room realized they shared similar issues, and they gave each other suggestions and encouragement. We look forward to our next meeting at the SARM Midterm Convention in November 2023.

It has been a great honor and privilege to have served as your SARM Division 5 Director these past ten years. The time spent as your director has been extremely interesting, including a huge learning curve and amazing networking opportunities. I have decided not to let my name stand in March 2024. I thank you for your continued support over the many years and I look forward to seeing familiar faces at upcoming SARM Conventions.

I would like to wish everyone the very best for 2024, health, happiness, and prosperity.

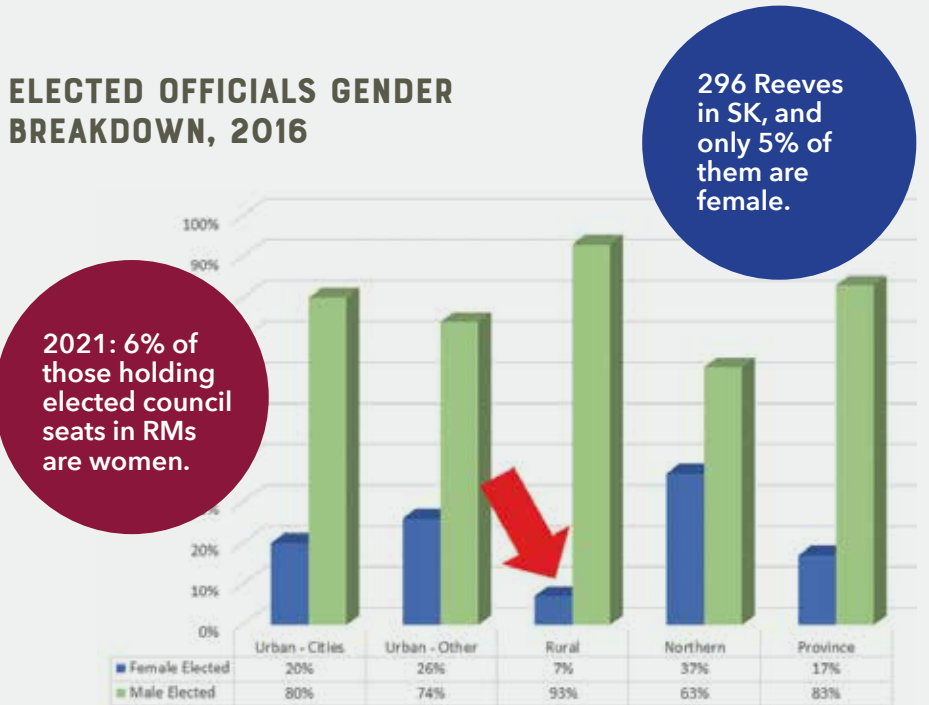
WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION BY PROVINCE



Taken from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) 2023 report on women's representation in Canadian municipal elected positions.

**Data is not currently available in a disaggregated format. CanWILL recognizes the importance of refined data which should show progress for often underrepresented women such as Indigenous, Black, and other racialized women as well as members of the LGBTQ2S+ community in municipal elected positions. This type of data should be available in the next iteration of this research.*

ELECTED OFFICIALS GENDER BREAKDOWN, 2016



To view the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) 2023 report on women's representation in Canadian municipal elected positions report visit: <https://fcm.ca/en/resources/women-in-local-government/women-representation-in-municipal-elected-positions-2023-report>

Or scan the QR Code:



FACING DROUGHT, WHERE CAN I GET HELP?



**BY DARWIN WHITFIELD,
SARM DIVISION
6 DIRECTOR**

SARM has still been busy working on issues surrounding the 2023 drought that impacted so many members, tracking both the severity, and the tools and programs available to help those agricultural producers in need.

AS OF TIME OF PRINTING, 80 RMS HAVE BEEN DECLARED AN AGRICULTURE DISASTER AREA.

This year, severe drought conditions plagued agricultural regions resulting in the depletion of water supplies, parched soil, and substantial hardships for the farmers and ranchers who rely on moisture for both crop and livestock production. Producers, particularly in western Saskatchewan, faced well below normal precipitation, which contributed to a substantial moisture deficit and hindered the recovery of pasture and forage ranges.

The Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC) programming is still doing its best to help on the production side. On July 12, 2023, SCIC announced the doubling of the low-yield appraisal thresholds to encourage grain producers to save their crops for feed without it negatively impacting their future crop insurance applications. SARM also called on crop producers in this situation to reach out to livestock producers in their area in an effort to help them secure feed for their herds.

AgriInvest and AgriStability are also important tools for producers to use during such times. Producer/government funds can be withdrawn

from AgriInvest accounts anytime to address immediate issues with cash flow.

There is also AgriStability which helps protect producers against production loss and unexpected increased costs in this type of situation. It compensates producers at 80%, and those enrolled can access an interim payment of up to 50% of their final payment.

On the livestock side, through the Livestock Tax Deferral Provision of the federal government's Advance Payments Program, producers can access low-interest cash advances. This allows producers to sell part of their breeding herd because of drought and defer a portion of that sale to the following year.

On August 21, 2023, the provincial government announced up to \$70 million to help offset the extraordinarily high costs of feeding livestock to maintain the breeding herd in Saskatchewan. To help provide immediate cash flow, the province made funding available based on receipts for substantially increased costs to purchase feed, or transport feed or livestock. It

also provides up to \$80 per head to maintain breeding stock for livestock including beef cattle, bison, elk, deer, sheep, and goats.

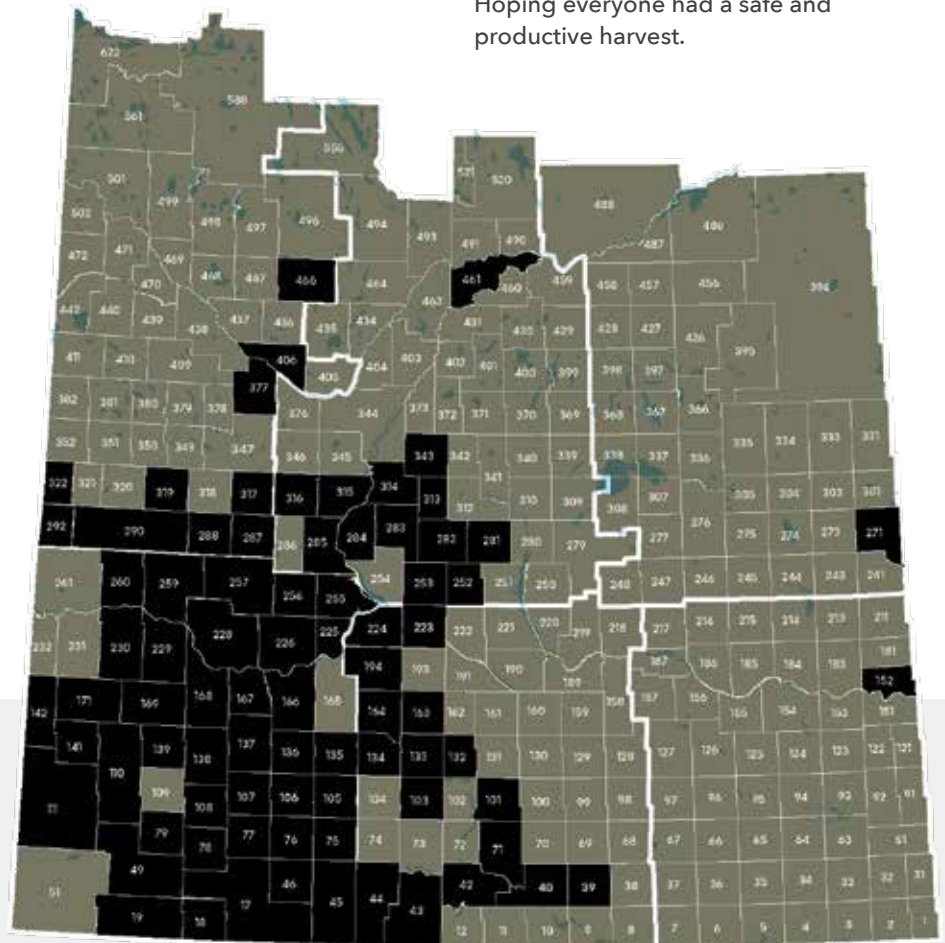
At the time of writing, assistance is also expected through the federal portion of the AgriRecovery program. SARM met with Saskatchewan’s livestock groups and heard that in the worst-hit areas producers are considering reducing their herds by 75%. A hit this sector can’t afford to take. One that will diminish the livelihood of Saskatchewan’s livestock sector, a major economic driver and food provider.

I would also like to remind producers that the Farm and Ranch Water Infrastructure Program (FRWIP) is still available, although it can’t provide relief this year, it may help in the future. FRWIP provides funds to help agriculture producers develop new wells, pipelines, dugouts, and small dams. Successful program applicants can receive a grant for 50% of eligible costs to help implement infrastructure that will assist in future years of drought.

If you know of livestock or crop producers still struggling in your area, encourage them to reach out to the Ministry of Agriculture Regional Office nearest them for advice on programming, feeding strategies, water pumping, and more tools to assist them. Or encourage them to call the Agricultural Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377 where they can help you reach the nearest regional office.

Lastly, but most importantly, please encourage any farmers you know who are experiencing stress, anxiety, depression, or any other mental health concerns to please contact the Farm Stress Line at 1-800-667-4442. Making sure anyone experiencing issues like this knows who to call for support is one of the most important messages we can all help provide.

Hoping everyone had a safe and productive harvest.



SASKATCHEWAN 2023 DROUGHT MAP DEPICTING RMs THAT HAVE DECLARED AN AGRICULTURAL DISASTER

- RM of Val Marie No. 17
- RM of Lone Tree No. 18
- RM of Frontier No. 19
- RM of The Gap No. 39
- RM of Benough No. 40
- RM of Willow Bunch No. 42
- RM of Old Posts No. 43
- RM of Waverly No. 44
- RM of Mankota No. 45
- RM of Glen McPherson No. 46
- RM of White Valley No. 49
- RM of Excel No. 71
- RM of Pinto Creek No. 75
- RM of Auvergne No. 76
- RM of Wise Creek No. 77
- RM of Grassy Creek No. 78
- RM of Arlington No. 79
- RM of Terrell No. 101
- RM of Sutton No. 103
- RM of Glen Bain No. 105

- RM of Whiska Creek No. 106
- RM of Lac Pelletier No. 107
- RM of Bone Creek No. 108
- RM of Piapot No. 110
- RM of Maple Creek No. 111
- RM of Hillsborough No. 132
- RM of Rodgers No.133
- RM of Shamrock No. 134
- RM of Lawtonia No. 135
- RM of Coulee No. 136
- RM of Swift Current No. 137
- RM of Webb No.138
- RM of Gull Lake No. 139
- RM of Big Stick No. 141
- RM of Enterprise No. 142
- RM of Spy Hill No. 152
- RM of Wheatlands No. 163
- RM of Chaplin No. 164
- RM of Excelsior No. 166
- RM of Sask Landing No. 167

- RM of Riverside No. 168
- RM of Pittville No. 169
- RM of Fox Valley No. 171
- RM of Ernfield No. 194
- RM of Huron No. 223
- RM of Maple Bush No. 224
- RM of Canaan No. 225
- RM of Victory No. 226
- RM of Lacadena No. 228
- RM of Miry Creek No. 229
- RM of Clinworth No. 230
- RM of Arm River No. 252
- RM of Willner No. 253
- RM of Coteau No. 255
- RM of King George No. 256
- RM of Monet No. 257
- RM of Snipe Lake No. 259
- RM of Newcombe No.260
- RM of Cote No. 271
- RM of Wood Creek No. 281

- RM of McCraney No. 282
- RM of Rosedale No. 283
- RM of Rudy No. 284
- RM of Fertile Valley No. 285
- RM of St. Andrews No. 287
- RM of Pleasant Valley No. 288
- RM of Kindersley No. 290
- RM of Milton No. 292
- RM of Lost River No. 313
- RM of Dundurn No. 314
- RM of Montrose No. 315
- RM of Harris No. 316
- RM of Marriott No. 317
- RM of Winslow No. 319
- RM of Antelope Park No. 322
- RM of Blucher No. 343
- RM of Glenside No. 377
- RM of Mayfield No. 406
- RM of Prince Albert No.461
- RM of Meeting Lake No. 466



THE 'S' WORD

BY R. DORAN SCOTT, RMAA DIRECTOR DIVISION 5

What do you think of when you hear the word sustainable? Likely it's here we go again. More environmental regulations that will hurt our economy and especially local producers.

That is a totally fair thought as sustainability has been pushed by the environmental lobby for decades. But, now hear me out, what if it's not just about the environment? What if the practice of sustainability is far, far, more diverse than a carbon tax, regulations, or something that you MUST DO because senior levels of government say so? What if you, as the people who implement and enforce local policy, were actually in control of the sustainability of your own communities?

The Government of Saskatchewan, in their Statement of Provincial Interest Regulations in Section 3(3.1) state "Comprehensive and sustainable planning requires land use plans and development decisions to consider economic, environmental, social and cultural needs of communities and regions for present and future generations"



<https://publications.saskatchewan.ca/api/v1/products/63700/formats/70924/download>

That article sounds quite a bit different than what we've been told by various

pundits, politicians, and media over the last couple of decades. While I can hear some of your eyes rolling to the back of your heads, let's explore this a bit deeper under the umbrella of sustainability.



OIL AND GAS TAX ARREARS?

Gregory Law office collection on contingency basis. No fee unless we recover. Some limitations apply.

Contact us for a no obligation consultation
Russell Gregory (306) 236-1973



Gregory
Law Office



ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Every municipality in the world already performs this to one degree or another. On its surface, it sounds very simple; where is the money coming from? What is difficult is considering where the money is going to come from twenty years from now. It's easy to say something like taxes, resource revenue, or fees but economics are intertwined with all the other components of sustainability. If there's no one to pay taxes are you able to maintain services? If resource revenue tanks again, then what? Some communities have social programs, who pays for them? What about a change in government? Again, sustainability is not just an environmental concern.



LAND USE PLANNING

Do you have an official Community Plan? Building Bylaw? Zoning Bylaw?

Are you aware that if you don't then RMs default to those that have been legislated by the province? These are pieces of blanket legislation that do not take into account the nuances and variations from RM to RM. It's one size fits all. By adopting these bylaws, councils have a direct influence on what is going to happen in their municipality not only now, but perhaps decades from now. It provides direction and a path towards how your municipality may grow.



SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY

Why do people come to your community? Why would they stay? Do you have recreation and schools available within a reasonable driving distance? Do you have senior housing? Who is going to pay for that as time goes on? Are the essential services (food, housing, water, internet) all available, and how is that going to get paid for if people aren't staying in the community? Is your community inclusive? These are all questions that elected and appointed officials struggle with every day.

Hopefully, I've been able to demonstrate just how diverse and intertwined the question of sustainability really is. As elected and appointed officials, it is our duty to plan for the future. After all, if we all fail to plan sustainably there is a very real chance that our communities might not be here for future generations. Planning for the future is very difficult and takes a lot of time. That said, having a road map moving forward can only be beneficial. Remember that these policies and bylaws not only guide you, but they also help guide the people that come after you're gone.



ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Let's just get this one out of the way. Environmental Sustainability is far more than climate change or green initiatives and regulations. What attracts people to your community? A lake? Golf course? Where is your water coming from? What happens if the lake isn't there? Do any of the SARM member municipalities have abandoned wells? Do you have a plan to remediate your garbage dump or transfer station in the next thirty years?

Obviously, all of the items above require money which ties environmental sustainability to the economic side of things. It's also completely reasonable to consider other items such as social and cultural sustainability when planning for the future.



MINISTER'S MESSAGE

BY THE HONOURABLE PAUL MERRIMAN, MINISTER OF CORRECTIONS, POLICING AND PUBLIC SAFETY

For the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency (SPSA), summer 2023 started a bit earlier than normal with intense wildfire activity and several related evacuations.

By early May, the SPSA faced many large and aggressive fires and called upon the support of partners across Saskatchewan. My heartfelt thanks go to everyone involved in the response to this summer's wildfires, grass fires and evacuations. By working together during challenging events such as these, we can ensure the safety of emergency response personnel and everyone in Saskatchewan.

Although the fire season started off very busy, it improved throughout the summer and, as we headed into fall, Saskatchewan supported other jurisdictions with wildfire response. Relying on existing partnerships and agreements with the Northwest Fire Compact and the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Centre, Saskatchewan sent firefighters and other personnel, aviation resources and fire suppression equipment to the Yukon, Northwest Territories, British Columbia and Alaska.

Now, as Saskatchewan transitions into winter, I want to highlight some of the other ways the SPSA is working to enhance, support and integrate public safety in Saskatchewan.



Over the last year, through the launch of several new programs, the SPSA has provided access to a larger pool of expertise and enhanced training opportunities for municipalities and fire services.

The Fire Service Minimum Standards (FSMS) Guide provides a written set of minimum standards for three levels of service, based on training and equipment capacities, which helps make firefighting safer in Saskatchewan.

The Transportation Rescue Extrication (TREX) program offers training and equipment to Saskatchewan Fire Departments to help enhance fire department response to motor vehicle accidents. This unique program was made possible by one-time funding from SGI, and the SPSA has begun to

develop the next iteration of the TREX program. Stay tuned for more details in the coming months.

The SPSA, in partnership with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Ministry of Immigration and Career Training and Suncrest College (formerly Parkland College), has also welcomed





firefighting training back to Saskatchewan with the opening of the new Saskatchewan Emergency Response Institute. The firefighting training program was tailor-made for pre-employment, volunteer and industrial firefighters in Saskatchewan, and the program's first cohort of firefighters-in-training completed their program in October 2023. Firefighters play a critical role in safeguarding and protecting the people, property and resources of Saskatchewan, and the Government's support of this program is an investment in them.

The SPSA is also a single point of contact for a broad range of public safety services, and they support many emergencies other than fires. They have responded to numerous search and rescue missions, ice rescues, flooding, train derailments, fire cause investigations and more.

The SPSA also opened the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre and worked closely with the Ministry of Trade and Export Development and Ministry of Immigration and Career Training to coordinate five humanitarian flights carrying Ukraine citizens who were fleeing the war in their country. By providing expertise in the Incident Command System and the coordination of large emergent events, SPSA staff helped ensure the needs of the arriving passengers were met.

Ensuring Saskatchewan is prepared for all hazards and large-scale emergency events and mitigating risks that can

contribute to severity/impact is also a top priority for the Agency, and they are taking action on these fronts in several ways.

The SPSA is currently taking significant steps to reduce the risk of wildfires to Saskatchewan communities through forest thinning, fire guard construction and vegetation maintenance in high-risk areas. Some of the funding for these projects is available through a nine-year agreement with the Government of Canada that began in winter of 2019/2020. The Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF) covers a percentage of the costs for projects on Crown land, Indigenous community lands and non-indigenous municipal lands.

Access to affordable, up-to-date emergency communications technology supported by the SPSA's Provincial Emergency Communications Centre is also increasing with several projects underway. The rollout of new Provincial Public Safety Telecommunications Network (PPSTN) radios, preparation for the launch of Next Generation 911 (NG9-1-1) and updated SaskAlert training are all part of the effort being made to ensure Saskatchewan is prepared for and able to respond to emergencies.

As we head into a new year, you can expect the SPSA to continue their focus on safeguarding and protecting the people, property and resources of Saskatchewan. Watch for new projects and initiatives, and opportunities to provide input into them, in 2024.



MINISTER'S MESSAGE

BY THE HONOURABLE JEREMY COCKRILL
MINISTER OF EDUCATION

The Government of Saskatchewan recognizes the unique nature of rural Saskatchewan due to our large geographic area, distances between communities, and agriculture-driven economy.

OUR GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING ALL KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12 (K-12) STUDENTS ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING, NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE IN THE PROVINCE.

In 2021, the Government of Saskatchewan committed to creating a central online learning provider, the Saskatchewan Distance Learning Centre (Sask DLC).

We have delivered on that promise with the Sask DLC welcoming students for the 2023-24 school year. The Sask DLC builds upon the success of previous online learning providers and is committed to ensuring students around the province have equal access to high-quality online learning, providing greater choice and flexibility in their education.

With more than 180 K-12 course options, including more than 70 unique high school electives, students can choose courses that may not have previously been available locally. These courses are all taught by Saskatchewan-based teachers in locations throughout the province, including Kenaston, where the head office is located, and nine regional campuses based in Swift Current, Moose

Jaw, Estevan, Yorkton, Saskatoon, Nipawin, Prince Albert, Neilburg and La Ronge.

Students and families can choose to learn online full-time, or high school students can choose to learn online part-time by taking one or more courses. Both full and part-time students are connected to their local school division and the Sask DLC to ensure they have access to supports such as educational assistants, speech-language pathologists, and counsellors. Students also continue to have access to local driver's license training, graduation ceremonies and extra-curricular activities, including arts and sports. The Sask DLC is committed to working cooperatively with school divisions around the province to support engaged students in reaching their full potential.

AGRICULTURE IS A LEADING INDUSTRY IN OUR PROVINCE AND A WAY OF LIFE FOR MANY FAMILIES.

Through the power of online learning at the Sask DLC, students can embrace their passion for this important industry by taking courses such as Agriculture Equipment Technician, Equine Studies, Cow/Calf and Agriculture and Sustainable Food Production. Through strategic partnerships with Saskatchewan industry leaders such as the North American Equipment Dealers Association (NAEDA), the Sask DLC is also creating pathways into the workforce that will help build a strong economy, including student work placement options.



Students will be able to graduate with the confidence needed to begin building a strong, stable, successful life for themselves and their families and become leaders in their communities.

This is an exciting and innovative time for the K-12 education system in the province. While we know that online learning is not possible for everyone, having it available to supplement, streamline, and personalize student's education demonstrates our commitment to the education system. Supporting the learners and students of today, no matter where they might live in our province, and ensuring access to high-quality education will help equip the next generation of Saskatchewan citizens with the knowledge and skills they need to reach their full potential.

Jeremy Cockrill
Minister of Education



ROAD WORK AHEAD?

Sidewalk, alleyway, road and sewer repair is important. But don't rush it. Damaging an underground utility line is dangerous and costly.

Request a line locate.

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Wetlands are powerful assets that benefit your residents.

Wetlands help mitigate and adapt to a changing climate. They:

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and other green infrastructure can work in your RM.**

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CONSIDER BEING A CROP REPORTER

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,
GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

Each spring, as seeding approaches, volunteers across Saskatchewan begin to pick up the phone or hit send to submit their data from field observations to the Ministry of Agriculture for the provincial Crop Report—a long-established feature of the province’s annual growing season which will be published in the months that follow.

**FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS,
THEY’VE BEEN GENERATING
INFORMATION ON CROP
CONDITIONS FOR PRODUCERS,
AGROLOGISTS, MEDIA,
MARKETERS AND INVESTORS
WORLDWIDE.**

Issued weekly on Thursdays, the Crop Report provides solid ground for making informed decisions about crop management, but it’s also an essential resource for government officials and industry experts to help in the development of policies and strategies to promote the growth and sustainability of the ag sector.

Currently, there are over 200 reporters passing along what they see and hear during the growing season, providing continual updates on crop conditions to the ministry online or by phone. Many of these volunteers are farmers and ranchers, although agrologists and other stakeholders are also among them. The bottom line is that no one has a better handle on crop conditions than these reporters do.

For the typical individual, it’s an investment of just a few minutes out of a week and is a simple process. The information-gathering stage can involve routines as straightforward as checking rain gauges and conversing with local farmers in a given area to obtain accurate, first-hand details on the situation in a rural municipality (RM). Information is then entered in an online survey which is automatically uploaded to the ministry database before being compiled and published online. In its final form, the completed report features comprehensive summaries, tables and maps that display ongoing crop and pasture conditions, such as moisture levels, in all regions of the province.



Support for Saskatchewan livestock producers affected by drought

This summer, the Government of Saskatchewan announced funding to help offset extraordinary costs of feeding livestock to maintain the breeding herd in Saskatchewan in areas of the province dealing with drought.

The program is being administered by Saskatchewan Crop Insurance Corporation (SCIC).

Visit www.scic.ca or call 1-844-723-1211 for information.

The Crop Report is always looking for more volunteers, regardless of whether an RM already has a crop reporter or not; naturally, the more details that are gathered from around the province, the more accurate the report will be. Producers, agrologists or other agricultural-minded individuals are welcome to contribute local information based on what they see and hear around their RM.

With over 100 Saskatchewan RMs currently without a crop reporter, there are plenty of opportunities available, with some of the largest gaps being in the southwest and southeast regions of the province.

Each year the ministry expresses its gratitude for crop reporters' service with an event in their honour. Last year 16 individuals were acknowledged for 25 years of service, up to an impressive 45 years—a testament to the pride these reporters take in their work, their commitment to it and their appreciation of its importance.

The ministry is deeply grateful for such support because the information it

provides helps their fellow producers not only here but around the world, helping maintain Saskatchewan's role as a leader in the global agriculture industry. If you've been asking yourself what you can do to pitch in and contribute by sharing your knowledge, this relatively small but incredibly significant role could be the answer.

FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE CROP REPORT AND HOW YOU CAN BECOME A VOLUNTEER, PLEASE VISIT WWW.SASKATCHEWAN.CA/CROP-REPORT.



STUDY CLOSE TO HOME AT SASKATCHEWAN'S REGIONAL COLLEGES

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTRY OF ADVANCED EDUCATION, GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan has a vast regional college system offering post-secondary education and training opportunities tailored to the needs of your community. You may be surprised to find a campus close by!

Saskatchewan's regional colleges are post-secondary institutions located in numerous communities throughout the province. These colleges offer courses and programs in trades, skills training and academic studies leading to certificates, diplomas and degrees. Regional colleges also provide adult basic education to prepare adult learners for post-secondary studies.

REGIONAL COLLEGES PROVIDE PROGRAMMING IN OVER 70 COMMUNITIES, INCLUDING 29 FIRST NATIONS, ENSURING STUDENTS HAVE OPTIONS TO STUDY CLOSE TO HOME.

Each regional college works closely with the sector and industries within the province to tailor their programming based on the needs of your community.

Many campuses provide learning environments of 24 students or fewer, promoting a sense of home for rural students. All colleges also offer flexible learning options for learners with childcare and transportation challenges.

Regional colleges are heavily involved in training Saskatchewan's health care workforce. Here are two examples of popular health programs offered at regional colleges throughout Saskatchewan:

Continuing Care Assistant (CCA)- The need for CCAs has never been greater, especially in small communities, and our regional colleges are adjusting to meet the demand. Training opportunities are available for students across all colleges on a rotational basis. Collectively, Saskatchewan's regional colleges will add over 100 new training seats this year across the province.

Most regional colleges offer the Primary Care Paramedic program. The Government of Saskatchewan recognizes the need for Primary Care Paramedics in the province. Paramedics provide important services in ambulances, wilderness settings, clinics, hospitals, and community. This year, Carlton Trail College added 12 seats and Suncrest College added 24 seats.

Regional colleges are responsive and nimble. There has been an increase in healthcare programs in response to the Health Human Resources (HHR) Action Plan, an increase in the skilled trades programs, and significant work in Adult Basic Education (ABE) to support marginal learners in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

The Government of Saskatchewan will provide over \$63 million in funding to the regional colleges. This year government announced \$800,000 for the planning and construction of Carlton Trail College's Technical Facility expansion in Humboldt.

The Government of Saskatchewan provides support for Saskatchewan students who wish to study at Lakeland College in Lloydminster.

For more information about the training options offered at your regional colleges, visit www.saskatchewan.ca.

CARLTON TRAIL COLLEGE

- Humboldt • Punnichy • Watrous
- Wynyard

GREAT PLAINS COLLEGE

- Biggar • Kindersley • Maple Creek
- Martensville • Swift Current • Warman

NORTHLANDS COLLEGE

- Air Ronge • Buffalo Narrows
- Creighton • La Loche • La Ronge

NORTH WEST COLLEGE

- Battlefords • Meadow Lake

SOUTHEAST COLLEGE

- Assiniboia • Estevan • Indian Head
- Moosomin • Weyburn • Whitewood

SUNCREST COLLEGE

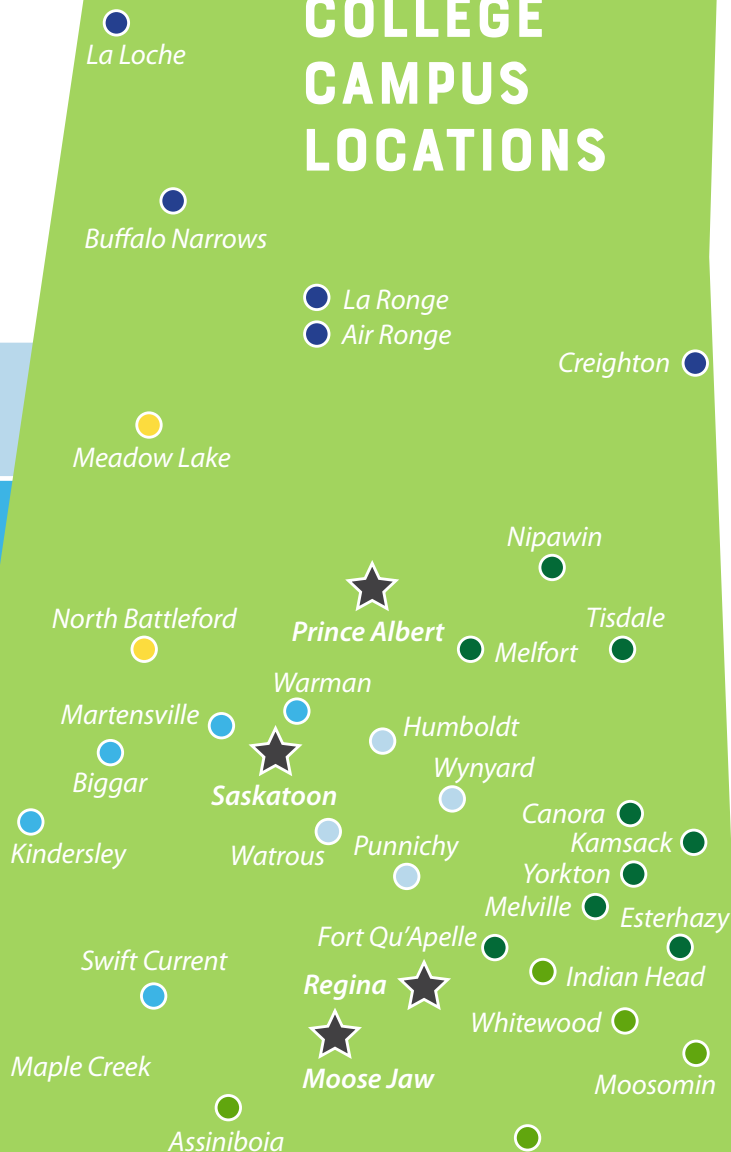
- Canora • Esterhazy • Fort Qu'Appelle
- Kamsack • Melfort • Melville
- Nipawin • Tisdale • Yorkton



FUN FACTS



REGIONAL COLLEGE CAMPUS LOCATIONS



Each college also has its own unique region and provides its own unique programs.

CARLTON TRAIL COLLEGE

Campuses: Humboldt, Punnichy, Watrous and Wynyard;
 Carlton Trail College is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2023-24 and expanding its regional Technical Facility for trades training in Humboldt.

GREAT PLAINS COLLEGE

Campuses: Biggar, Kindersley, Maple Creek, Martensville, Swift Current and Warman.
 Great Plains College offers the Welding Certificate program at its Swift Current campus with an award winning instructor.

NORTHLANDS COLLEGE

Campuses: Air Ronge, Buffalo Narrows, Creighton, La Loche and La Ronge.
 Northlands College's campus in La Ronge offers a Computer Science Diploma and will be delivering a new Dental Therapy program this fall.

NORTH WEST COLLEGE

Campuses: Meadow Lake and North Battlefords.
 North West College is home to the Cenovus Energy Simulation Learning Centre, which enhances the training of all healthcare program students.

SOUTHEAST COLLEGE

Campuses: Assiniboia, Estevan, Indian Head, Moosomin, Weyburn and Whitewood.
 Southeast College is the only regional college in Saskatchewan to deliver apprenticeship training for Levels 1-4 of the Powerline Technician program. This college also trains up to 20 students per year to become heavy equipment operators.

SUNCREST COLLEGE

Campuses: Canora, Esterhazy, Fort Qu'Appelle, Kamsack, Melfort, Melville, Nipawin, Tisdale, and Yorkton.
 Suncrest College was created this summer with the merger of Cumberland and Parkland colleges. Suncrest reopened its Saskatchewan Emergency Response Institute in Melville in 2023-24 after significant equipment upgrades and training grounds improvements, in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency.



**MEMBER PURCHASING
PARTNER**

ARE YOUR FLEET VEHICLES WINTER READY?

BY KAL TIRE, SARM MEMBER PURCHASING PARTNER

In Saskatchewan the shift from summer to winter sometimes feels like it happens overnight.

One day, your pick-ups and vans are running the air-conditioner full blast; the next day there's frost and everyone is leaving the rural municipality (RM) parking lot with the heat on. While keeping the cab cool or warm happens at the flick of a switch, having your fleet's tires ready for the season takes a little more preparation. This year, how can you ensure your fleet vehicles are ready

for their safest performance on Prairie winter roads?

Timing can make all the difference. Should you wait until the first snowflake falls to make the winter tire change appointments for your fleet?

"We always recommend booking changeovers early to avoid the retail rush and not take the safety risk of driving summer tires in cold weather or on the snow," says Kara Hiebert, a Kal Tire regional account manager based in Saskatoon.
















In Saskatchewan, changeovers can often be done as early as September, as soon as temperatures are regularly at or below +7C. It's at that temperature that the rubber compound of 3-season and

summer tires hardens and loses its grip. If it does snow, the tread can become clogged and slippery.

That means you could be compromising braking distance and cornering grip. In

**"IT'S BETTER TO HAVE
YOUR WINTERS ON A
BIT EARLY THAN TO GET
CAUGHT WITH YOUR
SUMMER TIRES ON TOO
LATE" ~ KARA HIEBERT**

fact, Kal's Tire Testing (performed independently by professional testers), showed on average, all-weather tires stop more than 6.5 m shorter than

	Winter Studded	Winter Non-Studded	All-weather	All 3-Season
Severe Service Emblem				N/A
Weather Conditions	 Harsh winter conditions with lots of snow, ice, and freezing water on the road.	 Consistent winter conditions.	 Milder winter conditions with heavy rain, snowfall that melts quickly and slush.	 Warm, dry and mild wet conditions.
Season for Best Performance	 temp below +7°C	 temp below +7°C	 temp above & below +7°C	 temp above +7°C
Braking Ice 30 km/h	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆
Braking Snow 50 km/h	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆
Cornering Ice	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆
Cornering Snow	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆
Rubber Compound	Designed to stay soft in cold temperatures for ultimate grip on ice. Best choice for heavy snow and black ice. Provides superior braking and cornering on ice.	Designed to stay soft in cold temperatures for ultimate grip on snow for excellent braking and cornering on snow.	Designed to stay flexible in temperatures above and below +7°C. Provides reliable grip on snow, slush, wet roads and bare asphalt, and they don't prematurely wear out in the summer.	Generally, a harder compound in order to get longer tread life, which loses traction when temperatures fall below +7°C.
Tread Pattern	 On icy roads, strategically placed metal studs provide exceptional biting grip (side-to-side and front-to-back). Aggressive tread blocks dig in to snow and ice, and prevent slush-planing.	 Deep, chunky tread blocks and sipes (thin openings) push away snow and slush to maintain road contact for reliable snow cornering and braking.	 Thicker tread blocks grip snow while grooves and sipes evacuate slush and water for stability in areas with milder winters and dangerous slush conditions.	 Small, low tread blocks designed to reduce road noise and roll easily in warm weather means in winter, channels clog with snow and slush, creating a slippery unsafe surface.

Legend

- ★★★★★ Excellent
- ★★★★☆ Very good
- ★★★☆☆ Good
- ★★☆☆☆ Fair
- ★☆☆☆☆ Poor

*star ratings based on normalized data

all-season tires when braking in snow and over 2.3 m shorter when on ice (a pick-up truck is about 5.6 m in length).

"It's better to have your winters on a bit early than to get caught with your summer tires on too late," says Hiebert.

What's also key is having all-weather or winter tires with enough tread depth to push away slush and snow, grip ice, brake and hold corners on slippery roads. How do you know if your winter tires are worn or safe for another season?

"For reliable braking and cornering on snow and ice, winter tires should be replaced when they're half worn," says Hiebert, adding Kal Tire stores can always perform a tread depth check if you want to be sure. Half worn is 7/32" and Transport Canada says tires worn close to 5/32" (4 millimetres) should not be used on snow-covered roads.

If it turns out a set of winter tires is ready to retire, it might be a good time to ensure your truck or van is running on the best tires for your needs.

"Taking some time to match the tire to your goals for safe performance and tread life in the conditions you face can go a long way," says Tia Harker, inside sales representative, Kal Tire. Across all-weather tires, winter tires and studded winter tires, a variety of options can be shared.

Harker says in northern Saskatchewan where drivers face heavy, hard-packed snow and ice, studded winter tires and winter tires are the safest options. In communities where RM trucks face milder conditions and travel mostly on city streets, drivers can get reliable performance with a high quality all-weather tire, which bears the mountain snowflake for winter traction

and has a special rubber compound and tread designed for safe, year-round performance.

"We do see a fair number of urban crew trucks running our top tier all-weather," says Harker. To make recommendations and book service, she leans on 70 years of commercial tire expertise and a Kal Tire network of 12 stores in Saskatchewan and more than 260 across Canada. "Feeling safe and assured that your tires can do the job in your region gives everybody peace of mind."

Not sure if your fleet is running the right tires for your needs? Get expert commercial light truck advice at Kal Tire. Contact your local Kal Tire store or visit **Commercial.KalTire.com** to learn about commercial tire products, programs, services and support.



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Contact your Redhead Equipment Territory Manager or local Redhead Equipment branch.



Starting an Agricultural Water Project?

APPLY TO RECEIVE FUNDING TODAY

The Water Security Agency is accepting applications for agricultural water projects that will help you organize the flow of water on and off your land. The Agricultural Water Management Fund cost-sharing program supports responsible drainage projects by

addressing barriers experienced by clients working towards drainage approvals. This will improve the sustainability and profitability of farmland, while managing the quality of water downstream.

Visit www.wsask.ca for more information.



wsask.ca



EMBRACING SASKATCHEWAN'S WINTER WONDERLAND: WAYS TO STAY ACTIVE IN RURAL MUNICIPALITIES



**BY ALICIA BAY,
SARM SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR**

As the colours of Fall fade away and winter sets in Saskatchewan, rural municipalities transform into snow and frost-filled wonderlands. There is much to see and explore! In this article, we'll look at some of the many adventures you can have this winter.

FULL DISCLAIMER: If your adventures happen to take you off the beaten path and away from public land, please remember that anyone who wants to participate in any recreational activity on private property in Saskatchewan must get permission from the landowner first, it's the law.

ICE FISHING

Did you know that Saskatchewan's official fish is the Walleye? Also, being home to roughly 100,000 lakes and rivers has its advantages. When the waterbodies freeze over, many RMs become prime ice fishing locations. If you have yet to try ice fishing, mark your calendar; February 17-19, 2024, is a free fishing weekend in Saskatchewan. This means residents and visitors to Saskatchewan can skip purchasing a fishing licence to head out on the lake that weekend. However, out-of-province visitors planning to take the fish they caught home must buy a licence. It is important to note that angling limits and all other sport fishing laws remain in effect. "Free fishing" weekend also does not apply in national parks. With all that in mind, pack your gear, dress for the weather, and try your luck. Ice fishing is a great way to spend the day bonding with family and friends.



Saskatchewan Anglers Guide 2023-24

But please remember to stay safe and check the ice thickness before you head out onto the lake. Also, ensure someone knows when you are leaving and when you plan to return.



For additional information:
<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/parks-culture-heritage-and-sport/hunting-trapping-and-angling/angling/regulations#ice-fishing>



CROSS-COUNTRY SKIING

Rural municipalities can offer a unique cross-country skiing experience connecting with the natural beauty of the prairies and the forests. Whether you're an avid skier or a novice looking for a serene winter escape, Saskatchewan's cross-country ski trails will captivate your heart and soul.



Tourism Saskatchewan has some great locations listed here:
<https://www.tourismsaskatchewan.com/blog/2022/12/20/cross-country-skiing>

SNOWMOBILING

Saskatchewan boasts an extensive network of snowmobile trails that wind through rural municipalities. From scenic forested routes to expansive prairie landscapes, snowmobiling offers a thrilling way to explore the countryside during the winter. Trail conditions and regulations can be found here on the Saskatchewan Snowmobile Association's website: <https://sasksnow.com/>. Remember your helmet and warm gear for a safe and enjoyable ride.

WINTER ACTIVITIES IN SASKATCHEWAN PROVINCIAL PARKS

Some of Saskatchewan's provincial parks have become hubs of winter activities in recent years. Skating, snowshoeing, bird watching and more can often be found at participating parks. Certain parks also host winter events and fun activities for the whole family. Just remember that a valid park vehicle entry permit is required to visit provincial parks year-round. Oh, and bring the marshmallows to warm up by the campfire when your fun-filled day is over!



For more information on participating parks and activities, please visit:
<https://parks.saskatchewan.ca/>

COZY RETREATS

Take a break and unwind in one of the many accommodations that Saskatchewan has to offer. Whether you prefer a rustic log cabin, a quaint bed and breakfast, a hotel, or a motel, you'll find accommodations that provide comfort and warmth against the winter chill. Take a trip somewhere new, and there is no guessing what you may find.

Find more about Saskatchewan accommodations here: <https://www.tourismsaskatchewan.com/where-to-stay#sort=relevancy>



DOWNHILL SKIING & SNOWBOARDING

Combine the beauty of our province with the thrill of downhill skiing & snowboarding. Saskatchewan is home to five slopes. Mission Ridge Winter Park, Wapiti Valley Ski & Snowboard Resort, Table Mountain, Ski Timber Ridge, and Duck Mountain Ski Area are great places to carve some powder, enjoy a relaxed atmosphere, and take in the serenity of the prairies.

Saskatchewan's rural municipalities come alive when the snow falls. From outdoor adventures like cross-country skiing and snowmobiling to the simple joy of ice fishing on a frozen lake, there's something for everyone to enjoy. So, embrace the magic of winter, bundle up, and all rural municipalities have to offer.

RICHARDSON'S GROUND SQUIRREL CONTROL KNOW YOUR OPTIONS AND REBATES AVAILABLE



**BY JOANNE KWASNICKI PAG
- PLANT HEALTH TECHNICAL
ADVISOR SARM DIVISION 2**

*With information provided by
Dr. James Tansey, Specialist -
Insect/Vertebrate Pest Management,
Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture.*

Richardson's ground squirrel (RGS) control has been a topic of much discussion in the past few years. Richardson's ground squirrels (*Urocitellus richardsonii*) are rodents native to Saskatchewan and their range extends over the shortgrass prairies. They feed on vegetation including native and forage grasses and legumes, pulse crops, cereal crops, and canola. When populations are high, they can cause significant economic damage. Strychnine has historically been the most widely used and effective rodenticide to control Richardson's Ground Squirrel. However, the Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) issued a final decision in March 2021 to de-register strychnine for RGS control. This means that as of March 2023, the rodenticide can no longer be used for RGS control.

Since Richardson's ground squirrel is a regulated pest in Saskatchewan and can cause significant losses for agricultural producers, it is important to know what options are available and effective at controlling large populations.

To evaluate the effectiveness of some of the gopher control products available, the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with the SARM Plant Health Technical Advisors, and Alberta Agriculture, conducted a Strychnine Alternatives study in the spring of 2022. The results of the study, shown in Figure 1, found that the zinc phosphide products evaluated (ZP Rodent Oat Bait and Burrow Oat Bait) were as effective as strychnine in reducing RGS populations. Additionally, these products also have a reduced risk of secondary poisoning and are not persistent in the environment.

In Spring 2023, Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture and Alberta Agriculture, in partnership with South of the Divide Conservation Action Plan (SODCAP), conducted another Strychnine Alternatives study in Saskatchewan and Alberta. The results from Saskatchewan (Figure 2) found that Burrow Oat Bait, ZP Rodent Oat Bait, and Ramik Green performed similarly to strychnine in controlling RGS. Strychnine had the lowest percentage of RGS survivorship, Burrow Oat Bait had the second lowest survivorship, and Rozol had the highest survivorship of RGS. The survivorship indicates what percentage of the original counted RGS population was counted after the product treatments were made. A lower survivorship indicates more effective control of the RGS while a higher survivorship indicates a less effective control.

The findings in Alberta indicated that Rozol and Burrow Oat Bait performed similarly to strychnine (Figure 3). Like the Saskatchewan study, strychnine had the lowest survivorship, while Burrow Oat Bait had the second lowest survivorship. However, the Alberta data showed that Ramik Green and ZP Rodent Oat Bait had the highest percentage of RGS survivorship, indicating they were less effective at controlling RGS than the other products. While there were differences in the results from the two provinces, both found that Burrow Oat Bait was as effective as strychnine in controlling the RGS populations, with the second lowest survivorship. This is supported by the findings in 2022 that also indicated that Burrow Oat Bait was as effective as Strychnine in controlling Richardson’s ground squirrel.

For the most effective control of Richardson’s ground squirrel, it is important to bait at the appropriate time. The best time for baiting is in the early spring when RGS emerge from

Percent Survivorship Post Bait Application 2022 Saskatchewan

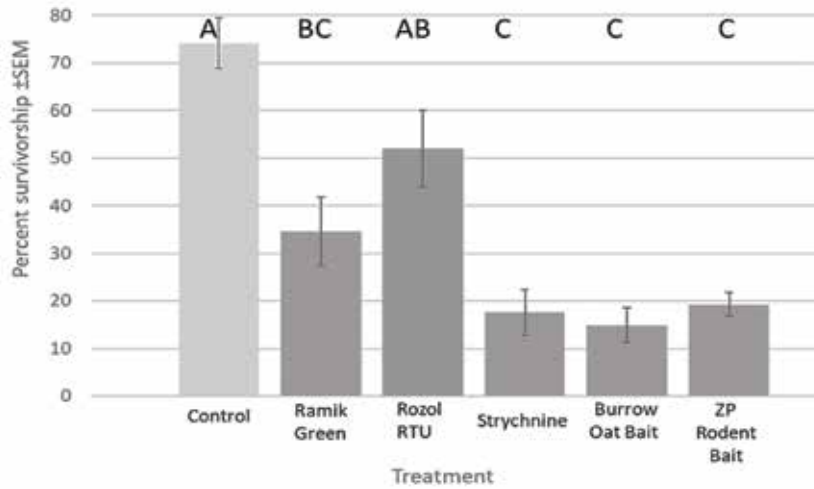


Figure 1. 2022 Saskatchewan data. Percent survivorship of RGS post-application relative to baseline counts on each site. Uncommon letters indicate statistically significant differences between the means of the treatment results.

Percent Survivorship Post Bait Application 2023 Saskatchewan

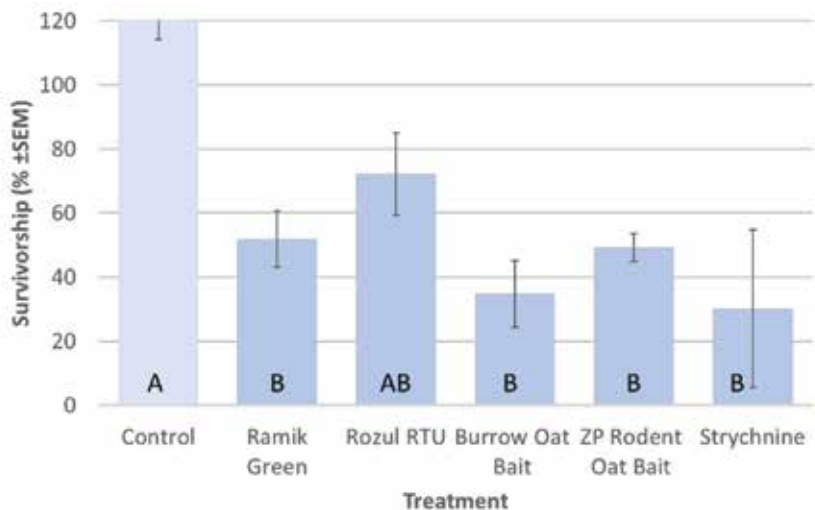


Figure 2. 2023 Saskatchewan data. Percent survivorship of RGS post-application relative to baseline counts on each site. Uncommon letters indicate statistically significant differences between the means of the treatment results.



their winter burrows. This can be as early as February depending on the region and weather conditions. Baiting early in the spring ensures that bait is eaten by the ground squirrels before more desirable green vegetation is available. This is especially important when using anti-coagulant baits like Rozol and Ramik Green, as the vitamin K in green plant material is an antidote to the active ingredients in these products. This timing also ensures that the female RGS are controlled before they have time to reproduce, which helps reduce the population. Always follow the product directions for the best results and to reduce the risk to non-target animals. For some products, pre-baiting or multiple applications are recommended, so take this into consideration when picking a product to use.

For producers in Saskatchewan looking to control gopher populations, the Sustainable Canadian Agricultural Partnership (Sustainable CAP) Gopher Control Program offers funding assistance of up to 50% to rural municipalities, First Nations, and ratepayers, for the cost of registered gopher control products used to control Ground squirrels (Richardson’s, Franklin’s, and thirteen-lined) and Northern pocket gopher) populations.

Additionally, applicants can get up to 50% rebates for the cost of materials for raptor platforms and nest boxes, to a maximum of \$125. The use of raptor platforms and nest boxes can be part of an integrated pest management program to encourage predation of gophers by raptors in areas where suitable nesting sites may be limited and help reduce reliance on chemical controls.

For more information on Richardson’s ground squirrel control, call the Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-866-457-2377. For more information on the Sustainable CAP Gopher Control Program, reach out to your SARM Plant Health Technical Advisor or visit <https://sarm.ca/programs/sustainable-canadian-agricultural-partnership/gopher-control-program/>.

Percent Survivorship Post Bait Application 2023 Alberta

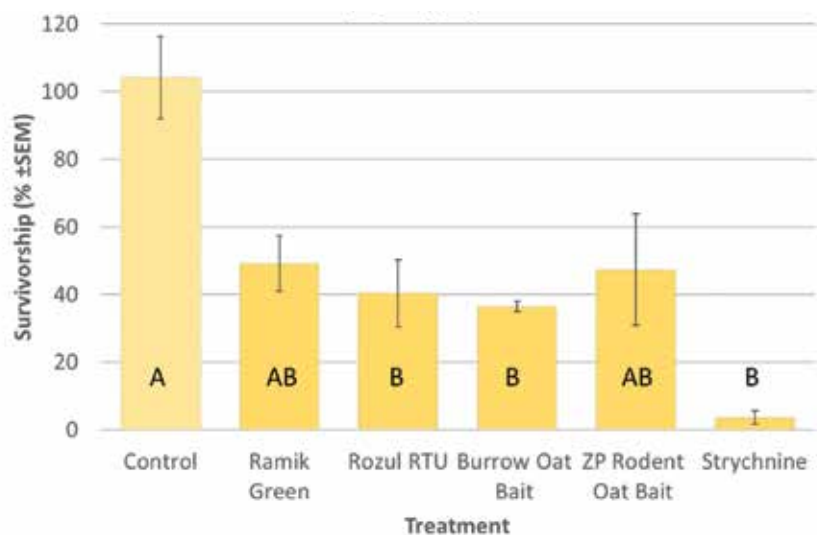


Figure 3. 2023 Alberta data. Percent survivorship of RGS post-application relative to baseline counts on each site. Uncommon letters indicate statistically significant differences between the means of the treatment results.



Lieutenant Governor's Award for Outstanding Service to Rural Saskatchewan

Awarded to Reeves, Councillors, or Administrators (active or retired) for their lifetime contribution to rural Saskatchewan.

**2024 Nomination Period:
NOV 1, 2023 - JAN 31, 2024**

Candidates must be nominated by an RM, with council's approval, and administrator's sign-off.

The committee includes representatives from:

- Lieutenant's Governor's Office of Saskatchewan
- Ministry of Government Relations
- Rural Administrators' Association
- Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities

Visit the SARM website for information and to access the [nomination form](https://sarm.ca/events/awards-and-recognition/)



<https://sarm.ca/events/awards-and-recognition/>

For questions contact:

SARM Executive Coordinator

executivecoordinator@sarm.ca or [306.761.3731](tel:306.761.3731)



Ray Orb
President



Bob Moulding
Division 1 Director



Larry Grant
Division 3 Director



Bill Huber
Vice President



Cody Jordison
Division 2 Director



Myron Kopec
Division 4 Director



Judy Harwood
Division 5 Director



Darwin Whitfield
Division 6 Director



Guy Lagrandeur
Ex-Officio Director

Happy Holidays from

Wishing everyone a cheerful holiday season





QUESTIONS (AND ANSWERS!) ABOUT SICK, INJURED, OR DISABLED EMPLOYEES

The Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission receives hundreds of inquiries every year from municipalities, businesses, service providers, and other employers throughout the province. Most of these inquiries are about employees who are sick, injured, or disabled.

Under *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code, 2018*, employers are required to accommodate these employees up to the point of undue hardship. Providing appropriate temporary or permanent accommodation due to illness, injury, or disability can be a win-win for both employers and employees.

Accommodation could include: providing employees with time off from work to attend medical appointments or

to recover from an illness or injury; modifying job requirements that account for the limitations an employee has arising from a disability; or providing new or different equipment to an employee to allow them to complete their work.

The following are some frequently asked questions the Commission receives from employers in Saskatchewan about sick, injured, or disabled employees.

MY EMPLOYEE IS OFF WORK DUE TO AN INJURY THAT IS NOT WORK-RELATED. CAN I TERMINATE THEIR EMPLOYMENT?

While the Worker's Compensation Board covers employees who are sick or injured in the workplace, *The Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* applies to all disabilities whether acquired at work or elsewhere. This includes disabilities acquired by the employee before they began working for a company or organization.

I HAVE AN EMPLOYEE WHO HAS BEEN AWAY SICK FOR MORE THAN 12 WEEKS. IS IT LEGAL TO TERMINATE THEIR EMPLOYMENT?

There is no maximum amount of time that an employee can be away from work due to disability. Under the *Code*, employers must not arbitrarily terminate an employee who has been away from work, regardless of the duration. In some rare cases, this could mean that an employee is away from work due to disability for several years and still be expected to return to work. Determining whether an employee may ever return to work requires communication with the employee and their physician or specialists.

MY EMPLOYEE IS SICK AND/OR HAS A DISABILITY. WHAT KIND OF MEDICAL INFORMATION CAN I REQUEST FROM MY EMPLOYEE?

For the purposes of assessing an employee's accommodation request, an employer is entitled to clear and credible information that supports the request. Often, the employee's doctor or other medical professional will provide a written description of the limitations or restrictions for the employee? For example: "no lifting of an object that weighs more than 10 kg over shoulder height."

THE EMPLOYEE SUBMITTED A DOCTOR'S NOTE, BUT IT DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT A DISABILITY OR EVEN WHAT THE ILLNESS IS. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY EMPLOYEE HAS A DISABILITY?

In the *Code*, "disability" is defined broadly. It means "any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement." It can also mean a mental disorder or an intellectual, cognitive, or learning disability.

Disabilities are normally assessed according to their severity and duration, so that minor ailments are not normally classified as a disability (e.g., the "common cold" or "flu"). But "disability" can include other common medical conditions, such as diabetes, cancers, chronic muscle or joint problems, depression, and anxiety disorders.

MY EMPLOYEE DOESN'T WANT TO PROVIDE ANY MEDICAL INFORMATION. WHAT CAN I DO?

An employee requesting accommodation on the basis of a disability is required to participate in the accommodation process. This normally includes providing the employer information from a physician or specialist describing their needs and restrictions.

However, there could be situations when such information is unavailable, or the employee is unresponsive. Employers must make all reasonable efforts to discover the reasons for the employee's absence or behaviour before escalating a request for information or dismissing the employee.

The documentation might offer a prognosis for recovery, or suggestions for a gradual return-to-work (e.g., "the patient can work 4 hours a day this week, returning to full-time hours the week following").

An employer may also need to know information about the possible impact of medication on an employee's work performance or abilities.

It is important to note that an employer is **NOT** entitled to a diagnosis.



**SASKATCHEWAN
HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION**

**HELPFUL
HINT:**

When it comes to laying off or terminating the employment of someone who is away on sick leave or disability leave, generally speaking, you should proceed with caution. Prior to taking action, seek legal guidance about the possible repercussions or call the Commission's Business Help Line at (306) 933-5952 for free information.

A BETTER FUTURE FOR SASKATCHEWAN: TIME FOR A NEW MUNICIPAL GROWTH FRAMEWORK



**BY SCOTT PEARCE,
PRESIDENT, FEDERATION
OF CANADIAN
MUNICIPALITIES (FCM)**

It was a sunny day last May when I began my official tenure as President of FCM, the national voice of Canada’s local governments. Since then, I’ve been hearing one message very clearly.

Our communities are where we expect our basic needs to be met - but municipalities are increasingly being stretched thin.

It’s municipally-supplied services and amenities that make life in this country what we expect it to be. As a mayor of a small rural community, I know the struggle of maintaining roads, maintaining our municipal infrastructure and buildings, and keeping our much-needed public services and events going.

But now, municipalities, as the government of proximity closest to the people, are taking on even more responsibilities outside our traditional set of duties.

We’re having to deal with more damaging extreme weather. There is a pressing need for new and renewed infrastructure, particularly rural roads and bridges here in Saskatchewan. And even the smallest communities are seeing community safety issues pulling on their municipal resources.

Since the pandemic, local governments - as the governments of proximity closest to Canadians - have been picking up the slack. Now, many are under serious pressure. Only the incredible resourcefulness and dedication of municipal officials has made the difference in helping communities make ends meet.

It’s time for a new approach.

The 19th century system we have for funding municipalities is hopelessly over reliant on property taxes. It’s inflexible and doesn’t support the work we actually do.

We can’t keep on delivering more with less.

It’s time to reimagine the future we want for our country and for all Canadians. It’s time for a new Municipal Growth Framework that looks at funding municipalities big and small through the lens of a growing country with growing needs.

We’re open-minded about what this might look like, but we want to build this new framework through up front engagement with our members, with provincial partners like SARM, and all orders of government. The unity of our municipal voice has been the foundation of FCM’s successful advocacy for many years.

An important element of a new Municipal Growth Framework is about redefining how we engage across orders of government. The power of collaboration is very real.

We know that when we collaborate as rural municipal leaders, we can get so much done.

FCM's recent Rural Forum's meeting was a fine example of this, with our adoption of a new policy statement on rural economic development, developed in close partnership with SARM. Through this new policy, which has strong Prairies representation, we're able to advocate for the federal government to more strongly support Canadian agricultural communities.

This includes strengthening incentives for sustainable management practices and new technologies to improve resiliency in the face of extreme weather, support food security, and improve access to new markets while partnering to share the costs of reaching Canada's climate targets.

We know nothing will break in our system if orders of governments sit down together and craft solutions that our communities can rely on long-term.

Now is the time for a national conversation on how we can meet our growth ambitions and make life better for Canadians across this country, by supporting the municipal infrastructure and services they rely on.

A new Municipal Growth Framework has the potential to better support our communities with the infrastructure, services, and amenities they need to thrive.

Saskatchewan's rural municipalities face urgent challenges, including the need to maintain and replace key physical infrastructure like bridges and roads, ensure better digital connectivity, and to protect our residents, farms and businesses from extreme weather. These are the kinds of problems that keep municipal leaders like us awake at night.

By joining FCM in this drive, Saskatchewan communities of all sizes can make sure they are better equipped to tackle these big challenges.

We're at a unique moment in time. The more we put into this drive, the greater the impact we can make. But we need the help and strength of all of our FCM members.

Visit the 'Municipal Growth Framework' page on our website at fcm.ca/growth to learn more about this important movement for change.

About the Author

Scott Pearce is President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and Mayor of the town of Gore. FCM is the national voice for Canada's local governments, with more than 2,100 members representing more than 92 percent of all Canadians.

**MID 20
TERM 23**
November 8-9

Agenda

Wednesday, November 8

- AM 9:00 Opening Ceremonies
- 9:30 Addresses
- 9:45 Breakout Sessions
- 11:00 Breakout Sessions
- PM 12:00 Lunch (served in QCC Foyer)
- 1:00 Fireside Chat
- 1:30 Breakout Sessions
- 2:45 SAMA Elections
- 3:15 Resolutions

Thursday, November 9

- AM 9:00 Welcome & Announcements
- 9:15 Presentation
- 9:45 Breakout Sessions
- 11:00 Breakout Sessions
- PM 12:00 Lunch (served in QCC Foyer)
- 1:00 Breakout Sessions
- 2:00 Panel Discussion - Drought Proofing SK
- 2:30 Presentation
- 2:45 STARS Presentation & 50/50 Draw
- 3:00 Adjournment



The Voice of Rural SK | SARM.ca





A SOCIOECONOMIC LOOK INTO SASKATCHEWAN'S AGRICULTURE COMMUNITY

BY MATTHEW SHUMSKY

In the heart of Canada’s agricultural landscape lies the province of Saskatchewan, where vast expanses of farmland stretch as far as the eye can see.

It’s here that we uncover a fascinating tale of prosperity and education within the rural¹ farm population.² Recently released data from Statistics Canada’s “Agriculture–Population Linkage, 2021” reveal some remarkable insights into this thriving community.



HIGHER MEDIAN INCOME

In 2020, the median income of farm households in rural Saskatchewan was remarkably high, at \$89,991—8.4% higher than the median income for all Canadian households (\$83,000). Clearly, Saskatchewan’s rural farm operators are reaping the rewards of their hard work and dedication to agriculture.

SASKATCHEWAN'S INDIGENOUS FARM POPULATION

Saskatchewan’s rural farm population is economically prosperous and notably Indigenous. In 2021, 4.1% of this population identified as Indigenous, a significantly higher proportion compared with the farm population in Canada as a whole (2.8%).

THE REIGN OF AGRICULTURE

The dominance of farming in Saskatchewan’s rural areas is undeniable. While rural areas accounted for 31.3% of the province’s total population in 2021, they were home to nearly three-quarters (73.4%) of its farm population. This shows the strong synergy between rural life and

¹ Rural areas (RAs) include all territory lying outside population centres (POPCTRs). Taken together, population centres and rural areas cover all of Canada.

Rural population includes all population living in rural areas of census metropolitan areas (CMAs) and census agglomerations (CAs), as well as population living in rural areas outside CMAs and CAs.

Dictionary, Census of Population, 2021 – Rural area (RA) (statcan.gc.ca)

² The Census of Agriculture “farm population” concept refers to all persons who are members of the households of farm operators. Dictionary, Census of Population, 2021 – Farm Population (statcan.gc.ca)

agriculture, highlighting the integral role of farming in shaping the province's identity and economy.

FLOURISHING FIELDS AND GRAZING CATTLE

Oilseed and grain farming have emerged as the backbone of Saskatchewan's rural farm community. In 2021, a remarkable 60.5% of the rural farm population was connected to these vital sectors, sustaining the province's reputation as a grain-producing powerhouse. Beef cattle farming also played a substantial role, with 22.4% of rural farm operators reporting this type of farming. These statistics underscore the diversity of agricultural practices in the province.

A COMMITMENT TO EDUCATION

In rural Saskatchewan, education is a cornerstone of progress. In 2021, 68.1% of the rural farm population reported having achieved a secondary school credential or higher, on par with the national rate for the total farm population.

RURAL EDUCATION PATHWAYS

In 2021, 25,665 members of the rural farm population in Saskatchewan reported having obtained postsecondary credentials. Agriculture-related fields emerged as the most frequently reported field of study, with 17.6% of graduates pursuing an agricultural path. Health-related programs followed closely at 16.3%, highlighting the importance of healthcare in rural areas, while business-related programs were reported by 15.7% of graduates. This diversity in educational pursuits enriches the rural farm population and equips its communities with a wide range of skills.

MANY STORIES TO TELL

2021 Census of Agriculture data show that Saskatchewan's rural farm population is a rich, vibrant community with many stories to tell. Its higher median income, dedication to agriculture and rich educational profile all contribute to the province's thriving agricultural community. At the centre of Canada's agricultural abundance, Saskatchewan's rural farm population is sowing the seeds for a future marked by prosperity and inclusivity for everyone.

To learn more about your community, visit statcan.gc.ca/en/census-agriculture. The next census of agriculture will take place in May 2026. Prior to each census cycle, Statistics Canada conducts a census test to evaluate new and modified questions in the questionnaire and the collection procedures and tools. The 2024 Census of Agriculture Test is conducted on a voluntary basis. It will take place in May 2024. If contacted, please participate—your voice and your story matter.



MAKING EVERY DROP COUNT

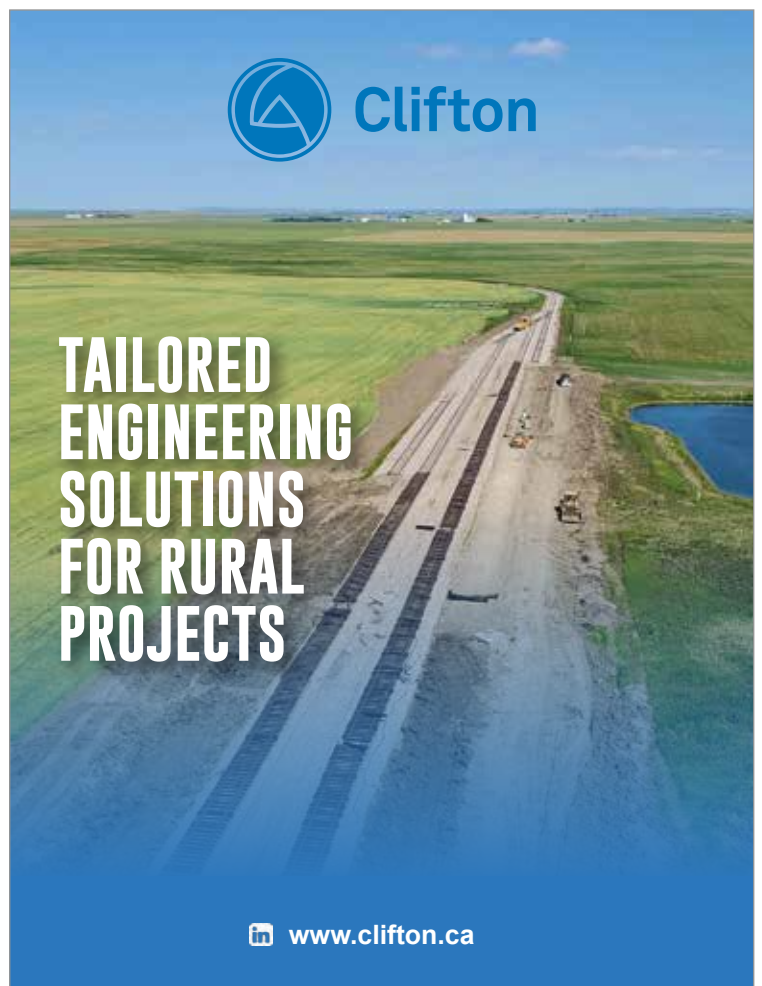
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CREATING A RESPECTFUL WORK ENVIRONMENT:



ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF TOXIC BEHAVIOR

BY RESPECT GROUP INC.

In the fast-paced world of today's organizations, fostering a civil and respectful environment is crucial for the wellbeing and success of both employees and organizations as a whole.

Uncivil work environments can lead to a range of problems that negatively impact productivity, employee morale, and even the organization's reputation. For the past 20+ years, we at Respect Group have worked with leaders and municipalities across North America and have seen some unimaginable issues that have stemmed from these toxic work environments. Here are some of the most prevalent issues that come up, and how they can be addressed in today's workforce.

1 DECREASED PRODUCTIVITY

In a toxic work environment, negative interactions and disrespectful communication can hinder productivity. Employees who experience bullying, harassment, or disrespectful behavior may become disengaged and demotivated. The hostile atmosphere stifles creativity, collaboration, and teamwork, leading to decreased productivity levels.

2 HIGH EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

Toxic work environments often result in increased employee turnover. When employees feel disrespected or constantly are mistreated, they may seek alternative employment opportunities. In fact, a toxic work environment is ten times more likely to contribute to employees quitting. This turnover not only incurs recruitment and training costs, but also leads to the loss of valuable company knowledge and hinders organizational progress.

3 POOR EMPLOYEE MORALE

Uncivil behavior significantly reduces employee morale and job satisfaction. When employees are subjected to disrespect and mistreatment, they experience frustration, anxiety, and demotivation. Low morale leads to decreased job satisfaction, reduced loyalty to the organization, and an overall negative work atmosphere.

4 INCREASED STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Given that most of us spend the majority of our days and energy at work, increasing hostility brought on by incivility doesn't bode well for our mental health. According to the US surgeon general, leading factors that contribute to a toxic work environment include overwork, unfair pay, and harassment and discrimination. The presence of toxic behavior in the workplace contributes to heightened stress levels among employees. Verbal abuse, bullying, and other forms of mistreatment can have

severe consequences. Increased stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout can result, impacting job performance and overall wellbeing.

5 LACK OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Incivility also hinders effective communication within the workplace. When employees fear expressing their opinions, concerns, or ideas due to potential backlash, communication channels break down and psychological safety is negatively impacted. This breakdown leads to misunderstandings, decreased collaboration, and a lack of opinion diversity that normally drive effective decision-making.

6 POOR COMPANY CULTURE

A toxic work environment contributes to a lousy company culture. If disrespectful behavior remains unchecked, it becomes normalized and perpetuated within the organization. Trust is eroded, relationships



are damaged, and a toxic atmosphere prevails, affecting the overall culture and image of the organization.

7 LEGAL AND CORPORATE REPUTATION RISKS:

Uncivil behavior exposes organizations to legal and reputational risks. Harassment, discrimination, and other forms of mistreatment can result in lawsuits, tarnish the organization's reputation, and have financial and legal consequences.

The good news for organizations is these toxic environments can be managed and prevented. In order to do this, organizations must prioritize creating a culture of respect and implementing policies and procedures to prevent toxic behavior from taking over. Here are some proven strategies to consider:

Promote a Culture of Respect

Leadership plays a crucial role in setting the tone for respectful behavior in any organization. It's leadership's job to emphasize the importance of respect, inclusion, and diversity throughout the organization. Fostering an environment where employees feel safe, valued, and

supported is good for business, and it's the right thing to do.

Establish Clear Policies and Procedures

Develop and enforce policies that explicitly address toxic behavior, including bullying, harassment, and discrimination. It's key to ensure employees are aware of these policies and provide multiple channels for reporting incidents.

Provide Training and Development

Offer (and oftentimes, mandate) training programs that educate employees about the impact of toxic behavior and promote positive workplace interactions. Focus on building emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and effective communication skills. The benefits of this training include not only better safeguarding your organization from these toxic behaviors, but helping organizations brand themselves as progressive leaders in their industry, which can help with recruitment and retention efforts.

Lead by Example

Leaders and managers should exemplify respectful behavior in their interactions

with employees. By modeling civility, they create a positive work culture where respect is the norm.

Encourage Open Communication

Create avenues for open dialogue and feedback. Encourage employees to voice their concerns, ideas, and opinions without fear of retribution. Foster a culture that values diverse perspectives.

Conclusion: A Culture of Respect Breeds Success!

Building a civil and respectful work environment is essential for the wellbeing and success of employees and the organization as a whole. By addressing the common issues associated with toxic behaviors, organizations can foster a positive atmosphere that promotes productivity, engagement, and employee retention. Together, let's create workplaces where respect and professionalism are the foundation for success.

For more information visit:
www.respectgroupinc.com/respect-in-the-workplace/

GAIN A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE BY USING A SYSTEMS APPROACH



**BY VERONA THIBAUT,
SASKATCHEWAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE (SEDA)**

We all know Saskatchewan municipalities are faced with a growing list of responsibilities and demands.

With stagnant or even decreased financial resources to implement these responsibilities, rural communities are presented with significant challenges that call for new approaches. Collaboration between municipalities and nations is arguably the essential component required right now, to leverage financial and human resources to ensure equitable and sustainable rural development.

A systems approach can help leaders transform these challenges into opportunities and gain a competitive advantage not possible for any single person, organization, or community working alone. With a systems approach, neighbouring communities look at how their region's goals work for—and sometimes against—each other. It can help you achieve more, not only through cooperation, but also by avoiding stumbling blocks that are easy to miss with other approaches.

This approach does not mean communities must give up their autonomy or create more red tape. Rather, it is about using common ground to build trust and collaborative solutions with urban, rural, and Indigenous neighbors, in addition to partnering with public, private, and nonprofit sectors to plan and execute joint initiatives. You bring all the players to the table to see what you'd be missing on your own and what you can achieve together.

The first step is recognizing how investment drivers depend on each other. Consider factors such as transportation, housing, childcare, workforce, health care, and broadband access. Each factor contributes to the fabric of rural resilience, rising above arbitrary and geographic boundaries. However, we tend to treat each of them as separate structures, and they often end up locked into disconnected systems and networks of policy advocates, service delivery agencies, funding sources, research specialists and political constituencies. If we want to achieve better outcomes and increase the rural readiness quotient, we need to connect these systems and networks into regional ecosystems—and that takes effective collaboration.



Timely delivery of maintenance was a major priority for the Agency in 2023, and SAMA delivered maintenance on time to 87% of our client municipalities.

For 2023, SAMA is working on 29,903 agricultural property reviews in 20 RMs, as well as 18,505 residential/resort property reviews and 12,779 commercial, industrial, and industrial flowline property reviews in both rural and urban municipalities. In addition, analysis for the 2025 revaluation is in full swing.

SAMA is on track to meet our strategic objectives, including our goal to review/inspect 100,000 properties in 2023. As of October 3rd, approximately 71,000 property reviews have been completed.

Looking ahead, municipalities can sign in to MySAMA to submit maintenance requests for 2024 rolls. To sign up for MySAMA, please contact your local SAMA office.

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.

We can look to the centre of Saskatchewan to find an example of leveraging common ground to support investment readiness. The English River First Nation (ERFN) Grasswood urban reserve is preparing for a new wastewater treatment plant in partnership with the RM of Corman Park. Under an agreement with the RM, the ERFN's economic development arm, Des Nedhe Developments, and its utility company will provide wastewater treatment services to the fast-growing southern part of the RM, in addition to 135 acres of urban reserve land. With this project—the first of its kind in Canada—the ERFN and RM of Corman Park have jointly leveraged financial support from the provincial and federal governments, and are laying a foundation for environmentally sustainable residential and business growth that benefits both communities. Rural and urban municipalities around the province should consider how they can apply a similar model in their own communities.

Another emerging opportunity that would benefit from a systems approach is housing. In a public-private partnership model of shared responsibility, each partner has an opportunity to put "skin in the game," so to speak. Municipalities can contribute via land and utility waivers; non-governmental agencies by leveraging social finance and public sector programs; the private sector as a development partner. Municipalities can even seek greater independence by establishing an arms-length municipal development corporation to provide a long-term return on their investment to support future demands.

A truly competitive community is one that is resilient. It's one where residents have jobs and opportunities, and they benefit from efficient and reliable services—regardless of upturns and downturns in the economy and fluctuations in federal and provincial funding. Rural Saskatchewan is diverse, and as our provincial motto suggests, has the opportunity to benefit "from many peoples strength." By tapping into that diversity, we can be stronger and more competitive than communities functioning alone. If we choose to skip out on collaboration, we will continue to miss out on investments, jobs, and opportunities that will pass our region over in favour of others that are reaping the benefits of a system approach. And ratepayers will pay a lot more for a lot less.

SEDA thrives on developing solutions with rural communities. We love to create synergies across geographic and institutional boundaries, to nurture transformative change and innovation. Our resources and experts can help you use a systems approach to create a competitive advantage in your region. **Visit www.seda.ca to learn more.**

SARM, through its Act of Incorporation, is mandated to work on files of importance to rural municipalities (RM) and agriculture producers.

There are currently four primary ways such files originate:

- membership resolution
- RM request
- board direction
- Federal and/or Provincial Government influence.

Getting to know SARM

Policy & Research



Brian Rakochy
Manager, Advocacy



Alicia Bay
Senior Policy Advisor



Deanna Nichols
Policy Analyst



Christine Breitzkreuz
Policy Administrator

At the direction of the SARM Board, the Policy & Research team meets and speaks with members and outside agencies on issues important to RMs, including bringing concerns forth at the provincial and federal levels.

The policy and research team

are responsible for the oversight of all research, analysis, and development and preparation of related documents and proposals. They evaluate the effectiveness of existing government policies and programs and draft policy related correspondence. This team also attends SARM board and committee meetings as required in support of the board and executive director.

Internal Committees:

- AG/Economy committee
- Municipal Oversight Committee
- Indigenous Relations Committee
- Resolutions Committee

Major Projects

- Ottawa lobby trip
- Federal budget submissions
- Provincial budget submissions
- Numerous consultations requests from various levels of government
- Rural Crime Watch Committee
- Crime Stoppers Committee
- Stakeholder meetings for various organizations

MEMBER NEWS

IN MEMORIAM



ERNEST DEBUSSCHERE RM OF TUCUMSEH NO. 65 IN MEMORIAM

Ernest Debusschere of Stoughton, SK passed away on August 10, 2023 at the age of 89. Ernest was born on March 16, 1934 on the farm south of Forget, Sask., left with special memories of Ernest are many family and special friends.

Ernest served on council from 1983 to 2016. Ernest will be remembered for his wisdom and dedication to the RM and many Boards served on. Ernest will be greatly missed by all at the R.M of Tecumseh No. 65. ▢



WALTER MYSKO RM OF CALDER NO. 241 IN MEMORIAM

It is with heavy hearts that the R.M. of Calder No. 241 mourns the passing of Walter Mysko on June 20, 2023 at the age of 92. Walter was the past Councillor for Division 5 from 1979 to 1984. As a Councillor, he was described as genuine, honest, fair and worked for the best interests of all ratepayers in the Calder municipality. Walter was born the youngest of 6 boys and raised on a family farm Northwest of Wroxton, SK. To complement his hard work on the family farm, he took joy in playing violin which led to Walter playing in several musical bands that entertained hundreds of people at dances, weddings and other celebrations throughout Saskatchewan and Manitoba. It was at one of these dances that he met the love of his life Mary Kluchka. Mary and Walter were married for 65 years until her passing in August of 2018. He is survived by his daughters Valerie and Audrey, sons-in-laws Gord and Launey, grandchildren Naomi(Andrew) and Alex, and great grandchild Brody. Walter was described as a very social gentleman and loved to stop and visit neighbors along his travels to pick-up the mail in Wroxton, returning home 4 hours later. He had a very special place in his heart for all animals, big and small, and would often bring home strays to show the girls, bringing them back to health or to adopt them. Strong Christian values and hard work were guideline pillars in Walter's life of 92 years. In all the good times and through all his challenges, providing for and caring for the needs of Mary, Valarie and Audrey and their families was always a priority for him. Being honest and fair was very important to him, and he expected that from his family and others in return. Those values guided him in every aspect of his life. Walter will be forever loved, missed and cherished by family and friends. ▢

IN MEMORIAM

DAVID LEDSON LAMARSH RM OF PLEASANT VALLEY NO. 288 IN MEMORIAM

It is with sadness the family of David Ledson Lamarsh announce his sudden passing on August 6, 2023 at the age of 65 years.

David was born on June 13, 1958 in Rosetown to parents Donald and Carol (née Davison) Lamarsh. He was raised on the family farm near Anglia and attended school in Rosetown. After graduation he was employed at Univision in Biggar. After working he decided to take a heavy-duty mechanics course through SIAST in Saskatoon. After graduating he moved to Calgary to work at Wajax for 3 years then moved back to Anglia to help on the farm, working at Conlin and Son's for 8 years until he started to farm full time. David belonged to the Pleasant 4H taking hunter safety which led to many hunting trips for waterfowl, upland birds, moose and deer. As a

youngster he did play hockey and baseball but his passion was bowling, winning a gold medal in the Proprietors Playoff in Vancouver. He was a devoted man who enjoyed teasing but could also be serious with a kind heart.

David is survived by his mother Carol Lamarsh, sister Nancy (Dan) Nagel, brother Leonard Lamarsh, special nieces and nephews Steven, Kevin (Marion) and son Caleb and Janelle (Colin) McNieven. He was predeceased by his father Donald (2019), grandma Grace Lamarsh (2006), grandpa Ledson Lamarsh (1981), grandma Laura Davison (2011) and grandpa John Davison (2004).

Dave was a dedicated councillor for the RM of Pleasant Valley from 2001 until his passing in August 2023. He also served as a board member and as the municipal representative on the Rosetown & District Health Centre Foundation Inc. since 2010. His experience and knowledge were truly an asset to the municipality. His dedication to his community will be dearly missed. □

Member News Submission Tips:

- Send photos as separate JPG, PNG, TIFF or PDF files (in a Word document).
- Try to send original photos not ones that have been scanned from printed documents or taken off of websites.
- Photos must be 300 dpi resolution. Tip: check the file size. If the file is less than 100 kb, it may not print properly.
- Check your phone's camera resolution before taking photos. Ensure that the camera's settings are for High, Highest Quality or Maximum resolution.
- Write-up length maximum: 250 words.
- Email submissions to sarm@sarm.ca.

Thanks for sharing your stories with us!



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